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THE ISLAND PRINCESS.

A ROMANCE OF THE OLD AND NEW WORLD.

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CHAPTER I.

AN INTERRUPTED WEDDING.

Ah! then and there was hurrying to and fro,
And gathering tears, and tremblings of distress,
And cheeks all pale, that but an hour before
Blushed at the praise of their own loveliness!
And there were sudden partings, such as press
The life from out young hearts, and choking sighs,
Which ne'er might be repeated; who could guess
If ever more should meet those mutual eyes
Since upon night so sweet, such awful morn could rise!

BYRON.

It was the first of May, the marriage day of the Viscount Montressor, of Montressor Castle, Dorsetshire, and Estelle, only daughter and heiress of Sir Parke Morelle, Hyde Hall, Devonshire.

A glorious morning! the cloudless, blue sky smiled down upon the green hills and dewy dales and deep woods of Devon; and the park around the Hall was all alive and musical, with the joyous songs of birds, and the merry laughter of young men and maidens gathering to celebrate their May-day festival, and to do honor to the marriage of their landlord's daughter.

The elm-shaded, winding avenue that led from the highway to the house, was arched at each terminus by a mammoth wreath of flowers, and many were the carriages that passed under them, on their way to assist at the wedding; and these contained only the bridesmaids, and the nearest friends and relatives of the family, whose relationship or position gave them the right to attend the bride to church;—for a still more numerous party had been invited to meet her at the altar. The villagers and tenants, grouped about under the shade of the great old trees, or wandering over the greensward on either side the grand avenue, watched these equipages as they rolled on, commenting—as usual—

"That is Sir William Welworth's carriage—he is the bride's uncle by her mother."

"Who don't know that?—Hush! my eyes! lend me a rumberrell, Joe, or I shall be dazed blind, along o' looking at this turn out! Whose is it? since you know everything."

"That?—that's Lord Dazzleright's—the great cove's as made a fortin' and *riz by the law*—(not at a rope's end though, as *you'll* rise one of these days, Bill, my lad, if you don't keep out o' the squire's preserves)—but by reading, and pleading, and keeping on the right, do you see, of the powers that be; until he got himself made a Baron of;—which people *do* say he'll get upon the woolsack yet," replied the gamekeeper, Joe, as the splendid equipage of the new member of the house of peers dashed past them.

"Yes; but what does *he* do here?" inquired the laborer, Bill.

"He's the god-father of the bride, you know, besides being a bachelor without children, I mean sons-and-heirs."

"Here comes somethin' like a huss—my granny! how solemncolly! who's comin' to a funeral?"

"Oh! let me see!—*that?* why that's the carriage of the old Duchess of Graveminster, the grand-aunt of Lady Morelle. She was expected at the Hall yesterday; something must o' stopped her," said Joe, as a large, sombre, dark-colored travelling carriage lumbered heavily past.

"What o'clock is it, Mr. Joe? you're a weatherwise and you can tell," inquired a young girl leaving a group of maidens and joining the two men.

"What o'clock, my dear?" replied the gamekeeper, looking up at the sun with an air of competence. "Well, I should say it was just about a quarter to ten."

"Oh—dear me! and the weddingers won't pass till nearly twelve! and here we are to wait two mortal hours! and I want to be away at the May-pole so much."

"Hush! my darling; look! here comes his Lordship's carriage, itself, just as sure as you're the prettiest lass in the country," whispered the gamekeeper, as a very plain but handsome travelling carriage of dark green, drawn by a pair of spirited grey horses, rolled on up the avenue towards the Hall.

"*Whose* Lordship's? What are you thinking about, Mr. Joseph?" asked the little maiden, fretfully.

"Why, *his* Lordship's! *The* Lordship's—the *only* Lordship to be thought about now, my dear! Lord *Montressor's* Lordship!"

"Now *that's* impossible, Mr. Joseph! If you *be* gamekeeper, you sha'n't make game of *me*, at that rate. Lord Montressor! Marry-come-up! what should *he*, of all men, be doing here at *this*, of all hours?"

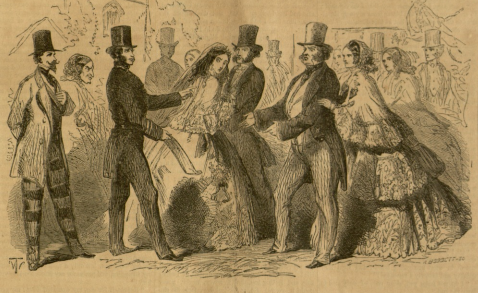
"Come up to marry, I suppose. Anyhow it is *he*."

"Nonsense! It can't *be*, I tell you! It would be out of all manners! Don't I know? He's to bring all his groomsmen, and *his* friends, and relations to the *church*, and wait *there* for Miss Morelle and her friends and relations! *That's* manners."

"I know it be!"

"That shows it can't be Lord Montressor who drove past just now."

"But I know *it be him*, also! Don't I know his Lordship's grey and crimson liveries? and his co't arms—the lion *couchant*, and the lady *sittin' on't?* It's *him*, now just as sure as you are just the sweetest creetur in the world; but what I be thinking of is—*what's to pay?* It looks like somethin' was *onreglar!*"



THE ARREST OF THE BRIDE.

"Onreglar? I believe you! Who ever heard of such a thing?—if it *be* Lord Montressor."

It was Lord Montressor.

Early that morning a note from his affianced bride had been put in his hands summoning him to a private conference with her at the Hall, before they should proceed to the church. Surprised and filled with vague uneasiness, his lordship lost no time in obeying the behest.

And it was really his carriage and liveries that passed.

Within the most secluded of her suite of richly-furnished apartments at the old Hall, half-buried in the depths of a cushioned chair, reclined the bride expectant, in bridal array.

On her right, a gorgeous cheval mirror reflected in profile her beautiful form.

On her left, through the rose-colored silk hangings of the half-open bay window, wafted by the breeze, came glimpses of the pure blue sky and tender green foliage of spring, scents of fragrant flowers, and sounds of singing birds and innocent laughter, from the park.

She was alone, her attendants having, by her own desire, withdrawn.

Estelle Morelle—or "la belle Estelle," "Beautiful Stella," "the Midnight Star"—as, for her resplendant dark beauty, she was poetically named—was at this time twenty-five years of age, and more lovely than a poet's or an artist's ideal. Her form was of medium height, and very slender, though well-rounded, with a graceful head, over which fell rich masses of jet black, silken ringlets, shading a face of pure, pale olive complexion, with large, mournful, dark eyes, habitually veiled by the long, drooping lashes, and delicate, though full curved lips, ever patiently closed as in silent resignation. The prevailing expression of her dark, brilliant countenance was a profound melancholy

The announcement of Miss Morelle's approaching marriage with the Viscount Montressor had created a profound sensation in the fashionable and aristocratic circles. A peerless beauty, the only child and heiress of the oldest, wealthiest and haughtiest baronet in the West of England, her heart had been as much the object of aspiration to the youthful and ardent, as her hand and fortune had been the end of desire to the mercenary and ambitious.

At the early age of seven years, Estelle had been placed at one of the first-class female institutions of learning at Paris, then as now, considered among the very best of their kind in the world, and there had been left to remain until her sixteenth year, when the sudden and calamitous breaking up of the institution, and her own severe illness, had occasioned her removal. That illness had been attended with marked changes in the constitution and temperament of the young girl.

Estelle, previously the most careless, light-hearted and capricious of children, left her chamber of convalescence a subdued, thoughtful, melancholy woman! The laughing lips of girlhood closed in patient sadness; the sparkling eyes sheathed their beams under long, shadowy lashes, now seldom lifted; the silvery, elastic voice, sank into deep and thrilling tones; the free, glad motions were measured and controlled.

She never entered another school, but completed her education under the best masters, at home. To dissipate what was considered a transient melancholy, her parents traveled with her over Europe, pausing at each capital and chief town, to show her all that was interesting and instructive. But though their daughter repaid their attentions with the sweetest gratitude, and obeyed them with the gentlest docility, she showed no interest in the passing scenes. And though everywhere her extreme beauty and sweetness of disposition, not less than her fortune and position, drew around her many friends and admirers, Estelle remained alone in her isolated thoughts and feelings. Every most distinguished physician in Europe had been consulted upon her case, and the result of their wisdom was a decision that this melancholy was not the effect of ill health, still less of secret sorrow, but that it was a constitutional phase that would probably pass away with maturing years.

They returned to England, presented their daughter at court, and introduced her into all the gaieties of fashionable life. But with no happy effect upon the spirits of Estelle, who remained profoundly unmoved amid the *eclat* that greeted her *debut*. Her picturesque beauty was the theme of all tongues—her mournful glance was fascinating—her deep tones thrilling—her touch magnetic; all felt her power, yet she who could move all others, remained unimpressed. She who sought no conquests, for that very reason perhaps, made many. A peer and two commoners, in succession, laid their fortunes at her feet, and were in turn kindly and firmly rejected.

So passed her first season in London, at the close of which her parents took her down to their seat in Devonshire. Here, in her thoughtful, quiet, unostentatious manner, she engaged in works of benevolence among the villagers and the tenantry. And her father, hoping much from this employment, gave her full liberty of action, and smiled to see that she seemed less pensive than before.

At the beginning of the parliamentary term, the family went up to London.

And it was here in her second season in town that Estelle formed the acquaintance of Lord Montressor, a young nobleman but lately acceded to his titles and estates, but already known as a man of the most high-toned moral and intellectual excellence, as a righteous, as well as a rising statesman, and as one, who in the event of a change of ministry would be likely to be called to fill a high official position in His Majesty's new cabinet. Aside from the glare of rank and wealth and power, Charles Montressor was a glorious specimen of the Creator's workmanship. Above the average standard of height among his countrymen, broad-shouldered and deep-chested, with a noble head, and a face full of wisdom and goodness, his appearance truly indicated the warm benevolence, clear intelligence, and pure spirit of the man. His presence soon inspired Estelle with a faith that she had not been able to feel in any other that approached her. He drew nearer to her than any other had been permitted to come; he crossed the magic circle of her isolation and conversed with her as no other had been allowed to do. The world looked and said that the beautiful Stella had at last met her master and was conquered.

At this stage of affairs, the parliamentary term being over, Sir Parke Morelle and his family left London for Hyde Hall.

Lord Montressor asked and received permission to follow them, and in less than a month availed himself of the privilege to do so. Thus it was in the home of her ancestors, after having obtained the cordial sanction of her parents, and believing himself sure of the affections of their daughter, Lord Montressor offered his heart and hand to the lovely Estelle, and was to his profound astonishment instantly and firmly rejected! In thus rejecting his suit she wept long and bitterly, praying his forgiveness, that the happiness she had experienced and exhibited in his society should have betrayed him into making this declaration, and beseeching him never to renew his suit; but to leave and forget her. There was something in the tone of her refusal which confirmed and deepened his previous conviction that—even in rejecting—she loved him! But with his high-toned sentiments he would not in the least degree presume upon that knowledge. Taking her hand with deferential tenderness, he said—

"Stella!—a man never but once, in his whole existence, loves a woman as I love you! I will not inquire the cause of the rejection, which you have certainly a right to make without assigning any reason for the act. And after having received this repulse, I may not in honor distress you by a renewal of my suit. But this, in parting, I must say to you—that, though I go hence, I shall not go out of the reach of your friends; I shall never address another woman; so if ever in the course of future weeks, or months, or years, however long, you may think proper to review the decision of this evening, Stella, I implore you, do not hesitate to let me know! Write but one word, 'Come,' and I return to lay an unchanged heart at your feet!"

Estelle was weeping too bitterly to reply.

"Stella, will you promise to do this?"

"Lord Montressor, best and dearest friend! Do not seek to bind yourself to one who can give you nothing in return! Try to think of the melancholy girl that you have pitied and loved—only as a shadow that fell for a moment across the sunshine of your path, and then passed away forever!—and so forget her!"

"Stella! I have pledged my honor never to renew this suit, unless you reverse in my favor the sentence you have pronounced upon it; but, inspired by the deep and deathless love I bear you, and 'hoping against hope,' I feel impelled to implore before leaving you, that, in the event of a favorable change of sentiment or purpose towards me, you will not hesitate to give me leave to return. Stella, will you promise me so much as that?"

"Noblest friend that I have in the world! how gladly would I promise, but I must not, Montressor. Were I to do so, you would feel bound to wait the changes of my mood, and so, for a most undeserving love, might miss, in some nobler woman's affections, the happiness in store for you!"

"Stella, will you raise your sweet, mournful eyes to mine one moment, that you may read my soul while I speak?"

Estelle lifted her dark orbs to meet the clear, pure, blue eyes bent with so much love and candor upon hers, and read the deep, unchanging truth and constancy of his soul as he said—

"Stella, in the presence of the heart-searching God who sees and hears me, I assure you that I shall never love another woman as I love you, and therefore, of course, can never wed another; so that, whether you give me this slightest of hopes or not, I am equally and forever bound! *Now* will you promise, Stella? Remember, it is only to let me know in case of a change in your sentiments."

For an instant the light of an unutterable love and joy broke on her beautiful, dark face, and her smiling lips parted to speak—when—as if a sudden memory and warning had gripped her very heart—she uttered a low, sharp cry, turned paler than before, and then, said—

"No! no! my Lord! Stella cannot even give you that! She is poorer than the poorest, in gifts to you! She can only pray that you may forget her and be happy."

He looked profoundly disappointed and troubled. But soon mastering his despondency he said, hopefully—

"Well, dearest Stella, although you reject me without apparent reason, and refuse to give me the slightest promise or the most distant hope, yet *I repeat*—should you in the long future, change your purpose, and write to me one word—'Come,' I will hasten to lay at your feet an unchanged heart!—Good bye! God be with you!" and raising her hand, he bowed over it, pressed it to his lips, turned and left the room.

Some moments after Lady Morelle, who came to seek and congratulate her daughter upon what she imagined to be the only possible result of the interview—found Estelle lying in a swoon upon the floor! It was followed by a long and terrible illness, terminating in a tediously protracted convalescence. The town season was at hand before Estelle was able to re-enter society.

They went up to London and once more the "star of beauty" arose upon its world. And though the cloud upon her life settled darker and heavier, day by day,—though she grew still more reserved, gloomy and isolated,—she was more followed, flattered and courted than before.

Thus three years had passed away, when one morning, while the family then occupying their town house in Berkely square, were seated at a late breakfast, and Sir Parke was engaged in reading aloud from the London Times an account of the saving of the French ship—Le Duc D'Anjou—wrecked off the coast of Algiers—Estelle uttered a low cry and sank fainting from her seat.

This attack was not, as the other had been, followed by illness; on the contrary, from that day, the cloud seemed lifted from her head, and even those who had most admired her face in its shadow, were enchanted to see how brilliant was her beauty in its sunshine! Her health and spirits daily improved, yet in the midst of all this flowing tide of new life, Estelle astonished her friends by suddenly, in the height of the London season, retiring to her father's country seat, where she remained in strict seclusion from the world for eighteen months.

At the end of this period, Lord Montressor, who had never left England, or lost trace of his beloved Stella, and who was now staying at his castle in Dorsetshire, was one day seated at breakfast when the morning mail was brought him. Among a score of letters the first that attracted his attention was a dainty white envelope superscribed in a delicate handwriting. He took that up first and opened it—it contained but one word—"COME."

The light of an ineffable joy broke over his face! Oh! he had waited, patiently, hopefully, years, for that word, and at last he had received it! Thanks to Heaven in the first instance! and then pushing all the other letters unopened aside he sprung up, rang for his valet, and ordered his valise packed and horses put to the carriage.

In twenty more minutes he had reached the railway station just as the cars were about to start, and in three hours he was at Hyde Hall and standing in the presence of Estelle!—she looking so beautiful and happy!

With the old chivalric enthusiasm of devotion, he dropped, at once, upon his knee, and raised her hand to his lips, saying—

"For four years I have hoped and waited for one word from you, and at last, beloved, you have written—'Come,' and I am at your feet, as I said, with an unchanged heart!"

"But I," she said, deeply blushing, while she held both hands to raise him, "I, my Lord, have not an unchanged heart! for longer than four years I have loved you more than woman's tongue may tell—and never more, than at the hour in which we bade farewell, as I thought, forever!"

"I know it, beloved! I knew it *then!* knew it *always!* I never doubted it! Could I be deceived in the dear heart of the woman I loved! No! and that was the secret of my patience!" he replied, taking his seat on the sofa by her side.

"And yet you never inquired, and do not even now inquire, why, without explanation and without hope, I sent you from my presence, and why now, without apparent reason, I summon you back!" she said, as a shade of the old sadness fell upon her beautiful face.

"Your motives, dearest, were, and are your own. Not until your spirit moves you to do so, shall you give them to me! I have full confidence in you, beautiful Stella!"

"*Confidence! oh my God!*" she exclaimed in a low, deep, thrilling tone.

"Why, what is the matter, dearest?"

She looked up suddenly, a smile of worshipping love, breaking like sunlight over her dark face, and said—

"Nothing, nothing my lord! but that all your thoughts and feelings ere so elevated beyond your poor Estelle's! And yet she would almost choose it so! for could she be an angel, she would wish you to be something far higher—a god!"

"Sweet enthusiast! moderate your aspirations, or the world and its people will disappoint you! Be not an idolator; worship only God, my Stella."

Such was their meeting!

Yet, occasionally, throughout the interview, a sudden shadow like the recurrence of a painful thought, would fall upon her bright face and then pass as it came.

They were engaged, and within a few days the marriage was announced to take place on the first of May.

But it was observed by the nearest friends of the bride, that from the day of her betrothal, her spirits had been marked by the strangest fluctuations. Sometimes with her beautiful dark face illumined with a deep, still, almost religious joy, she moved about as it were, on "winged feet," or sat brooding in a happy trance. At other times, she fell into deep gloom and anxiety, as inexplicable as it was alarming to her friends, who greatly feared her relapse into the deep melancholy that had so long overshadowed her, and that they had grown to dread as a serious constitutional malady. But they hoped everything from her approaching marriage with the man she loved. Lord Montressor observed with the deepest interest the uncertain moods of his betrothed; but with the high-toned sentiments that distinguished him, refrained from inquiring, and awaited her voluntary revelations.

At last the first of May, the marriage day, upon which I have presented the parties to the reader, arrived, and all the *haut ton*, as I said, were gathered at the Hall or at the church to do honor to the solemnities.

And the expectant bride, in her bridal robe and veil waited within her boudoir, the arrival of the bridegroom, whom she had summoned to a private interview before they should proceed to the church. She had not long to wait. He who quickly responded to her slightest intimation, immediately obeyed her call.

Yet when she heard his firm elastic step approaching,

"Now God have mercy on me!" she prayed, and covered her face with her hands.

He entered, unannounced, and saying,

"My beautiful Stella! I am here, you perceive, by your commands!"

She dropped her hands, and revealing a face pale with misery, spoke in a thrilling, deep, impassioned tone—

"You are here by my *supplication*, my lord! I have no right to command."

"We will waive that! what is your will, my dearest Stella?"

"*My prayer*, my lord—is first, for your forgiveness."

"*Forgiveness?*—my Stella!"

"Ay! my dear lord! you see before you a penitent and a supplicant, who may soon be something far more wretched!"

"My Stella! what mean you?"

"Come to the window, Lord Montressor!" she said, rising and preceding him. "Look out," she continued, putting aside the rose-colored hangings, and revealing a view of the park below, alive with its restless multitude. "What are all these people waiting for, my lord?"

"What are they waiting for, my Stella?—for that, for which I also wait, with how much more impatience!" he answered, while a deep flush of love and joy, for an instant, supplanted the anxiety on his face.

"They wait to see a bride pass, where a bride may never go!" she said, in a solemn voice.

"Stella! great Heaven! what say you!" he exclaimed, gazing on her with profound astonishment.

"That the bride they expect is unworthy to stand before God's holy altar beside Lord Montressor!"

"Unworthy, Stella! You!"

"*Most unworthy*, my lord!" she said, dropping her arms, and dropping her head in an attitude of the deepest misery. "I should have made this confession long ago, Lord Montressor; but I have deceived you—I have deceived you!"

"In what respect, Stella? My God! It cannot be! No, it cannot be! that while betrothed to me, you do not love me!"

"*Not love you! Oh! my dear lord!*" she murmured, in a voice of thrilling tenderness that carried conviction of her truth to his deepest heart.

"What mean you, then, dearest one? if indeed you return my deep love."

"Oh! I do, I do, Montressor; whatever happens, wherever you go, take that assurance with you! I love you, my lord! shall ever love you, even though after what I shall have told you, you repulse and hate me, and go to our friends and say, —'That woman whom I was about to wed, is but a whited sepulchre, whom I have proved, and whom I now reject'—and so leave me to the scorn of men, still I say—ever shall say—I love you, Lord Montressor! I love you, and the consciousness of being unworthy of your love, is the bitterest element in my punishment," she said, in a voice of such prfound misery, that Lord Montressor could scarcely continue to believe her agitation unfounded or exaggerated.

He dropped upon a seat, and sitting still and white as a carved image of stone, gazed upon her, waiting her further communications.

She had thrown herself into her chair and covered her face with her hands.

"Speak, Stella!" at last he said, in kind, encouraging tones.

She dropped her hands from a face from which a deep blush had burned away the lilies,-essayed to obey, but the words seemed to suffocate her, and she remained silent.

"Speak, dearest Stella," once more he said.

She cowered and shuddered, murmuring—

"Oh! kill me! kill me! Indeed I think it would be right!"

"My beloved Stella," he said, in a voice of deep tenderness, rising and approaching her—"can you not trust in me?"

"Ah! not with loving words though! Kill me not with loving words!" she cried, almost wildly.

"Stella, be calm, beloved! Your bitter self-accusation cannot make you seem unworthy to me. Take time and explain."

"Lord Montressor! it was my deep love—alas! the selfish and injurious sentiment, unworthy the holy name of love,—that has sealed my lips so long! An hundred times I have been on the point of making to you a revelation, that I have never even made to my parents, and as often the terrible fear that I should never afterwards see your face again, has withheld me."

"My dearest Stella! I know not what you may be about to reveal to me; and since it is not that you do not love me, *I* do not dread to hear it. I cannot be mistaken in your pure, womanly heart, Stella; and here I pledge you my word, that whatever that revelation may be, *it shall make no change in our present relations.*"

"What! Oh, Heaven! What do you say!" exclaimed Stella, holding her breath in listening.

"I say, beloved, that in an hour from this, I shall with your permission, lead you to the altar; and that whatever you may in the meanwhile reveal—since it is not that you have ceased to love me—shall not change my purpose."

"What, what, have I not misunderstood you, my lord? You did not mean to tell me——?"

"I meant to tell you what I now repeat,—that nothing you have to reveal shall change our present relations. Come, dear Stella! if any secret sorrow oppresses your heart, lay it trustingly on mine. Confide in one, who in another hour will be your husband."

"Dear Father in Heaven! dost Thou hear him? —dost Thou hear this man whom I have so long deceived, and whom I would have so bitterly wronged. Montressor!" she said in a voice of thrilling tenderness,—"does not the grief, and terror, and humiliation, written on my brow, *warn* you that some deep sin is to be confessed?—something that may, or must change our present relations, and make it incumbent on you to go below and announce to our friends—'this woman is totally lost, and our marriage is at an end.' You are warned. Will you still promise blindly?"

"Not blindly, dearest Stella! That something in your past life has gone very wrong,—that you have hitherto shrunk from confiding in me, I do begin to see; but that your sense of honor now obliges you, despite your terrors, and in the face of all consequences, to make the revelation, I also see! Stella, I have known and loved you, only you, for seven years! I am not a man to be mistaken in any woman; much less in you, whom I have known and loved thus long! I love you! esteem you! trust in you! Do you likewise confide in me! Lay your secret sorrow on your promised husband's faithful heart, beloved, for he is able to shelter and sustain you," he said, and went and closed the blinds of the bay-window, to shut out the glaring sun and the merry laughter, and then returned and sat down, and held out his arms to receive her, saying—

"Come, love! come drop your weary head upon my bosom, and whisper what you have to say."

"No, no, Lord Montressor; at your feet, rather, should your poor Stella tell her story," she murmured, sinking down before him, and dropping her face upon her hands; but he caught and raised her to his heart, and held her there.

"Come now, dearest Stella, speak!"

"Alas! alas! my lord, you think me a young girl whom you clasp to your bosom!—I am not! —What! you do not put me thence?"

He gathered her closer, and bent his head down protectingly over her.

"Lord Montressor, do you hear me? do you hear me say that I am no young girl whom you gather to your bosom?"

"A widow, then, my Stella," he said, changing color, but modulating his voice, so that no slightest inflection should wound her stricken heart.

"Yes, a widow! Oh, noble *Sans peur!* And you do not reproach me?"

"I do not. Come, now, tell me the whole story, love."

"Lord Montressor, you know so much of my life that I need but use a few words to inform you all you require to be told of its fatal, secret history. You are already aware that, at the age of seven years, I was sent to Paris, and placed at Madame L'Orient's *Pensionnat des Demoiselles*, an establishment of the highest reputation, where I remained until I was fifteen years of age. It was when I had but just completed my fourteenth year that Victoire L'Orient, the only son of my teacher, was presented to me by his mother—" Here the voice of Estelle broke down, and she paused as if unable to proceed. Her companion waited a little while, and then said, encouragingly,—

"Speak freely, dear Stella."

"I am sure, Lord Montressor, that I do not mean to endeavor to shift the blame from my own shoulders to those of others, but at this distance of time I see clearly that Victoire L'Orient was introduced to me, by his mother, with sinister views,—to ensnare, in fact, the heart, and win the hand of the wealthy English heiress. Victoire was ten years my senior, handsome, accomplished, insinuating and—since the truth must be revealed, unprincipled; though of his moral turpitude I had no suspicion until it was too late! too late!" Again the voice of Stella sank, and she covered her face with her hands.

"Compose yourself, dear love, and go on, that this may be finished, and your heart relieved."

"Without seeming to do so, Madame L'Orient fostered our acquaintance into friendship, if friendship could be said to exist between the deceiver and the deceived,—into intimacy at least. Looking back now, I cannot understand the spell of fascination that was woven around me! Enough, alas! that I thought I loved Victoire, and was drawn step by step, first into an admission of my sentiments towards him; then into an engagement, subject to my parent's consent; and, finally, without appealing to them, into a clandestine marriage!"

Stella ceased and buried her face in her hands. Lord Montressor laid his hand on her head, and both were silent for a little while; after which she resumed, in a voice of thrilling passion,—

"Oh! yet think, in judging me, how young I was, how inexperienced I was, how fatally influenced, in what intriguing hands, and then how quickly and bitterly I repented!"

"I do not *judge* you, dear one,—I only *wait* to hear the end."

"I am sure, that while she was careful not to appear in the matter, Madame L'Orient, who was an accomplished intriguante, forwarded our marriage. Alas! before many months, I understood and felt, both how bitterly I had sinned and had been sinned against! I remained at school, as before my marriage, as it was the decision of my husband and mother-in-law, who did not wish the reputation of her establishment to suffer, to keep the union a secret until after I should have finally left school and returned to England and my father's house. My husband, who had lodgings near the Pensionnat, visited me at his own convenience rather than at mine. Oh! very soon indeed I discovered the worthlessness of the man who had ensnared my childish heart and hand! Would you believe of any man scarcely, such things as I am about to tell you of him?—not that I wish to reflect dishonor on the dead, but that I wish you, Lord Montressor, to know how soon and how terribly I expiated my sin! Victoire was addicted to inebriation, to gambling and licentiousness, and every species of dissipation and excess. These vices kept him always in want of money; and he not only seized and turned into cash my girlish trinkets, and appropriated all my pocket-money, but *abused* me when I had no more to give him! bidding me write to my father for funds."

"OH-H!" groaned Lord Montressor, with the energy of a man who strives hard to repress himself.

"I did as he bade me! I drew freely on my father, who always lectured me severely for my supposed extravagance, *without* always honoring my supposed drafts;—and when he did not," continued Estelle, rising, standing before him, extending both her hands and surveying her own beautiful figure—"this little form you cherish so tenderly, this slight frame, that was even smaller then, bore, in black and blue, the marks of his violence!"

"Oh-h!" once more, groaned Lord Montressor, losing self-command, starting up and pacing the floor. Then returning, he reseated Estelle, stood leaning over her chair, and asked under his breath—

"Was the creature left to die a natural death?"

Stella shook her head, saying—

"Patience, beloved! God had patience with him, why should not we! As for myself—my sufferings were a just retribution. The froward maiden and undutiful daughter was fitly punished. Young as I was I felt it so, and thus, with some grace of patience, I accepted it all!—all, Montressor!"

Again, unable to proceed, she paused and dropped her face upon her hands, he waiting silently. Presently she gathered firmness and proceeded—

"In a year from my sinful marriage, I became the mother of an infant girl. My swimming senses scarcely perceived the child, before all consciousness left me, and life was a blank for many weeks. When I returned to consciousness, I found myself at a hotel, in charge of my father and mother;—but my husband and child—where were they?—how long had I been at the hotel?—and how much of my circumstances did my parents know? These questions soon forced themselves upon my mind, ruined my rest by day and night, and seriously retarded my recovery. I feared my father even more then, than now; and I dared not risk a single inquiry upon the subjects of my anxiety. At last, I discovered that I had been ill, though not always unconscious, for eight weeks; that my parents had been with me only a few days, and that they were totally unsuspicious of my new relations as wife and mother. I dared not inform them. I waited restlessly, impatiently, for the appearance of my mother-in-law, who never came. At last, with caution, I inquired after Madame L'Orient. I was told that her establishment was broken up, and was recommended to be still and refrain from exciting conversation. As I convalesced I gradually learned the truth—very gradually, for had the knowledge come suddenly, I should not now be here, telling you the story—the terrible shock must have killed me!" she said, and shuddered from head to foot.

"Compose yourself and proceed, dear Stella! You speak to one who sympathizes with every phase of your suffering."

"Of my *punishment!*—that is the proper word."

"Do not reproach yourself so severely, Stella; but proceed, my love."

"Ah! how shall I go on! how shall I inform you of the horrors that came to my knowledge? I should have told you, that for a week before I was first taken ill, I missed Victoire, but believing he had gone upon one of his frequent pleasure excursions, and glad to be left for a few days in peace, I felt no uneasiness on account of his absence. After my recovery I learned that at that very time he was under arrest upon the charge of treason. And during the period of my long illness he had been tried, convicted and sentenced to death. His punishment was afterwards commuted to transportation to the penal colonies. He was then on his way to Algiers.

"His mother, who was seriously implicated in the same crime, had been examined, and for want of evidence against her, discharged. Notwithstanding her acquital, the popular feeling was so hostile to Madame L'Orient, that she was not only compelled to break up her establishment, but to leave the neighborhood. After a great deal of difficulty, I contrived to secure a private interview with Madame before she left the city, and inquire the fate of my infant. 'Dead and buried in the Cemetiere des Innocens,' was the answer I received. She had lived but an hour, and died about the same time that I had fallen into a state of insensibility. What more had I to do in Paris, or even in the world. My life seemed blighted, my heart broken, my doom sealed at fifteen years of age. My injured and unsuspicious parents, concerned for their daughter's failing health and spirits, took me to the German baths, thence to Sicily, thence over Europe, and finally brought me home to England, in the faint hope that quietness and native air might do for me that which travel and change of scene had failed to do. In vain! there was no hope, or help for me in this world. My sorrow was deepened by the necessity of concealing its dreadful cause. I dared not confide that secret passage of my life to either of my parents. You know the uncompromising arrogance of Sir Parke, and the sensitive delicacy of Lady Morelle. Their only and cherished daughter the wife of a———! The revelation would have killed my mother, would have driven my father mad! I bore my sorrow—my punishment in silence; but do you wonder at my deep, incurable melancholy? As a last resort, they took me up to London, presented me at court, and introduced me into the whirl of fashionable life. My debut in society made what is called 'a sensation,'—my career was, in common parlance, 'successful.' I had many 'eligible' suitors; perhaps the sadness that shrunk from observation and attention, was from its very strangeness attractive. At length *you* came, and saw and loved me, all unworthy as I was, and I soon perceived in you the master of my heart and life! But, oh! the unspeakable agony of feeling this, and feeling too, that I never, never, never could be yours! So, at the last day, feels the sinner who sees, at length, that for some fair poisonous apple of Sodom, unlawfully seized on earth, he has lost the kingdom of Heaven! *Do you still wonder at my deep, incurable melancholy?* We parted. I bore that sharp anguish, as I had borne all the rest, even as the just retribution of my sin!"

"My dear, dear Stella! you reproach yourself without measure."

"When I recovered from the long, nervous fever into which that great trial had thrown me—to please my parents I re-entered society, and was followed, flattered, courted as before; but nothing would dissipate the gloom of my soul. At last, while in Berkely-square, at my father's breakfast-table, I heard him read from the Daily Times, among other items of news, the account of the wreck of the French ship '*Le Duc D'Anjou*,' on her passage from Algiers. Now the slightest circumstance relating to that Province had for me a terrible interest, and I listened as I should never have done had not the ship sailed from that coast. The last name on the list of the lost was that of Victoire L'Orient!"

"Great Heaven!"

"God forgive me! I thought not of the horrors of the shipwreck, the sufferings of the crew, or even of the loss of the poor men drowned with Victoire. I only felt my evil genius gone, the gloom and terror lifted from my life, and I swooned with the shock of a great deliverance!"

"I do not wonder, good Heaven!"

"When the re-action came, I knew how wrong had been this feeling; and to atone for it, and to pay respect to *death*, if not to the *dead*, I withdrew from society and retired to this place, where I remained in seclusion eighteen months, just as I should have done in mourning the decease of a near and honored relative. I brought down that copy of the Times, containing the account of the shipwreck, and have preserved it—here it is," she said, lifting an old paper from a table near her. "Look at it—there is a note in parenthesis following the name of Victoire L'Orient—I mention it only as a providential confirmation of the identity of the man."

Lord Montressor opened the paper, looked down the column until he came to the list of the lost, and to the last name—Victoire L'Orient, with the following annotation.

'This man, it may be remembered, was some years since convicted of a complicity in the treason of De Vil, attended with circumstances of a memorable character, and was sentenced to be transported for life to the convict colony of Algiers. He had lately received his pardon, and was on his way to France.'

"Why have you preserved this, Stella?" enquired Lord Montressor, when he had finished reading.

"I do not know—some strange instinct!—perhaps to prevent my fancying the account to be a mere dream. Well! at the end of my eighteen months of self-inflicted seclusion, I summoned you, dearest friend, to my side. You came, loyal heart! you came at once! I meant to have immediately revealed to you the secret story of my sin and punishment, and so, before you should have had time to commit yourself, left my fate in your hands. But that first interview was so sweet that I could not disturb its harmony! I said 'I will tell him to-morrow.' Morning came, and we were so happy, I shrank from clouding our bright joy, I said, 'I will tell him in the evening.' Your very perfections frightened me from the task. Again and again I postponed the revelation, in the vain hope that another day I should have more courage to make it. Alas! day by day, the disclosure grew to seem more strange and difficult. At length as the day of our marriage drew near, each hour rendered the necessity of my confession more imminent, and the act of making it more terrible! Last Sunday I thought I would then tell you; but —I *could* not do it! Yesterday I felt sure that I should inform you; but, the first attempted words suffocated me! The scene around swam before me!"

"Alas! did you so dread me, my gentle Stella?"

"This morning *all* dreads vanished before one great fear!—the fear of presently standing before the Lord's holy altar, to palm upon you as a maiden's hand, the hand of the widow of Victoire L'Orient. This is my revelation, Lord Montressor," she said, rising with a certain mournful dignity. "I sinned first and greatly against my parents in contracting a secret and unauthorized marriage; and long and terribly have I expiated it! But I have sinned even more against your pure, noble nature, in keeping this from your knowledge since our engagement, and even up to this last hour! It has cost me much to make it now; but now, that all is said, I feel relieved and strengthened! You are my judge, Lord Montressor."

"Dearest Stella!" he said, taking her hand, reseating her, and standing, leaning over her chair, "let me be now, as always, perfectly frank with you. First, let me repeat that your painful story has made no difference in my feelings and purposes towards you, nor, as a matter of course, in our present and future relations. I do not gainsay, dear Stella, that your premature marriage was a great wrong; but I remember that you were an inexperienced child in the hands of intriguing and insinuating people, with whom you were not prepared to cope! I do not either deny that your concealment of your previous marriage, first from your parents, and afterwards from your affianced husband, was a greater wrong; but I can easily understand how, in the first case, the haughty severity of Sir Parke, and the sensitive pride of Lady Morelle, should alike have frightened you from making the revelation; and still better can I sympathize with your shrinking reluctance to confide such a secret to me; and feel how much more difficult every day of delay must have rendered such a confession; and through all, how your refined and sensitive mind, brooding day and night over your misfortune, should have come to exaggerate both the magnitude of the fault and the difficulty of concealing it; and, finally, my victorious Stella, I can appreciate the triumph of principle in your present disclosure. Come to my heart, sweet Stella!" he said, opening his arms and gathering her to his bosom.

"Not until this hour, dear Stella, have I fully won your heart," he whispered, dropping his face caressingly upon the silky black ringlets of her bowed head—"not until this hour have I fully won your heart!"

"But now I am all your own. Oh, my lord! my lord!—all your own—heart, soul and spirit!" she said, in a voice of thrilling tenderness. "I had that blighting secret, that I dared not lay on the strong breast of the father that gave me life, nor on the tender bosom of the mother that bore me, but which at last I confide to your own great heart, and you receive the trust, and gather me within the fold of your powerful arms, and have no word of bitter reproach for my sin, but only a tender compassion for my sufferings; no humbling pity for my weakness, but only a noble sympathy with my struggles, and praise for my late—too late victory!"

"Reproach for *you*, my wounded dove! my gentle, patient sufferer? Nay, rest on my bosom; rest sweetly here awhile," he murmured, smoothing her hair with his hand.

"Oh, the blessed relief, the sweet, sweet repose, the measureless content, I find on this sustaining breast!" she breathed, in a deep sigh of deliverance and rest.

"Would for your own sake, beloved, that you had sooner laid the burthen of your secret sorrow upon your promised husband's faithful heart—that you might have sooner found the relief he can give you, gentle and beautiful Stella."

"Beautiful! did you say, my lord? Would, indeed, that I were infinitely beautiful, that I possessed genius and accomplishments equal to that beauty, and wealth and power to match both, for your sake, Montressor; for I should say then as now,—'all that I am and all that I have belong less to me than to my dear and honored lord! I am his own, his own! I am cradled in his heart! I live, breathe, think, love only in and from his great life!'"

"You are, indeed, sweet Stella, the heart of my heart!"

"Would your Stella were more worthy of you."

"More worthy of me? Do not talk so, love! Women are queens, always too good, for men; and you of women, most queenly, and should not bate your state, to speak to your subject in this style," said Lord Montressor.

"Woman should not reveal her heart so plainly even to him who possesses it! Is that your meaning, my lord, and is it so?—for I, you see, do not know! I only know intimately one woman—myself, and now I am not so much myself as you? Shall I practice reserve with *you?*"

"No, no, dearest; too long you have practiced reserve."

"Well, that is over. I have laid my soul open to your view! I have shown you a sorrow that I dared not trust to father or mother; even as we let the holy eye of God see things which we conceal from our dearest friends."

"But now your parents must be informed of all, dear Stella."

"Oh! no, no, no! It would kill the one and craze the other," exclaimed Estelle, white with terror. "No, no; none but your own kingly heart could bear the revelation!"

"Fear nothing, dear Stella. They need not be told just yet; with their feelings, the disclosure of such a story concerning their daughter, Miss Morelle, might indeed be attended with serious consequences. I shall wait until the law has invested me with the exclusive right to watch over your honor, peace and welfare, and to protect you, if need be, even against the severity of your father, and the reproaches of your mother, before I make the disclosure, and then, the story told them of Lady Montressor by the lips of her husband, who here pledges himself to bear her blameless and harmless through all—will come very much softened to their ears."

"Ah, Heaven! Lord Montressor, will you do this?"

"It must be done, beloved! Your parents must know all; your life must be cleared and calmed. I take that task upon myself. Resign yourself to my charge; trust in me; lay your weary, young head on my breast, and let your spirit sleep if you will; for no harm can come to you in the shelter of my love!"

"Oh! you are so good and great! Would I were better and wiser for your sake! You should have an angel for a wife!"

Lord Montressor smiled.

"I do not aspire to an angel, or to any better or happier woman. I love you just so, with the mournful earth beauty in your eyes."

The opening of the door startled them, and Lady Morelle entered.

She was a magnificent-looking woman—of a tall and finely-proportioned figure, and a haughty carriage, delicate aquiline features, with an expression of blended pride and fastidiousness, fair complexion, blue eyes, and light hair arranged in plain bandeaux. She wore a light blue brocade satin dress, and a mantilla of rich white lace. She entered, smiling proudly.

Lord Montressor arose to greet her.

"Good, morning, my lord. I hope the interview this most capricious of dear Stellas demanded, is at an end, for, whether it be or not, I must interrupt you. It is half-past eleven, and if there is a marriage to be solemnized to-day,[*] it is full time we were at the church."

"Our interview is concluded, madam! I am ready, and only waiting your ladyship's convenience," said Lord Montressor, advancing an easy chair for the lady's reception.

"Thank you, I do not wish to rest. Your attendants, my lord, are——"

"They are probably now waiting me at the church, madam, where I will meet you a few minutes hence. *Au revoir*, dear Stella!" said his lordship, and lifting the hand of his promised bride to his lips, and then bowing to Lady Morelle, he left the room.

The lady rang for her daughter's maid.

"I declare, Estelle, I never knew so strange a girl! Now what, possibly, could you have wanted to say to Montressor this morning?"

"I only wanted to put his heart to a last trial, dear mamma."

"Your head is turned, I think!—but here comes Finette. Now stand up and have your robe smoothed, and your wreath and veil put on."

At this moment, the French dressing-maid, Finette, entered, and Estelle stood up before the cheval mirror, while the girl drew down the folds of her robe, and took up the virginal wreath of orange blossoms to set upon her head.

"Not that—not that, Finette! Open that box, it contains a coronet I have chosen for this occasion."

The girl raised the lid of the box that her mistress had indicated, and drew thence a rich wreath of passion flowers.

"That is the wreath I shall wear, Finette."

"Why, my dearest Estelle, how eccentric! Who ever heard of a bride wearing other than orange blossoms in her hair? Do, love, be reasonable!"

"Do, sweet mamma, indulge me on my marriage day, and permit me even to be *un*reasonable in the trifling affair of choosing a wreath."

"Well, well, as you please, you dear, eccentric creature! Lady Montressor will soon be in a position to give the law to fashion in all matters of taste, and it is easy to foresee that she will be an innovator!" said Lady Morelle, proudly and fondly, as she gazed upon her beautiful daughter.

And thus the wreath of passion flowers was placed upon her brow, the veil thrown over her head, and the toilet of the bride was complete.

"Come now, my love, let us go down," said the lady, giving her arm to her daughter to conduct her from the room.

In five more minutes Estelle Morelle was handed into a close carriage, the three other seats of which were occupied by her father, mother, and first bridesmaid. This carriage was preceded by that of the Duchess of Graveminster, and that of Lord Dazzleright, and was followed by a barouche containing the four other bridesmaids, and by various coaches of the friends, relatives and acquaintances of the bride's family, who had been invited to attend her to the church. As the procession defiled down the grand avenue, the village men and maidens gathered on either side to see it pass, and children threw flowers in the road. The bell rung a joyous peal, that continued until the cortege reached the church, which was a small gothic building just beyond the park gates. The yard was filled with carriages of almost every description, and among them was recognized the crimson and grey liveries of Lord Montressor. As the cortege entered the church yard, Lord Montressor alighted, and stood waiting until the carriage of Sir Parke Morelle drew up before the church door, when he went and received his bride as she descended, and bowing with reverential tenderness, drew her arm within his own, and preceded by the Duchess of Graveminster on the arm of Sir Parke Morelle, and then by Lady Morelle on that of Lord Dazzleright, and followed by the bridesmaids and groomsmen in pairs, entered the church. The pews and the side aisles were crowded to suffocation; and the beadle had enough to do to keep the centre aisle sufficiently clear to admit the passage of the bridal procession.

Amid all this assembly, one group, gathered into a remote and deeply shaded pew in the corner to the extreme left of the entrance, in their manifest desire to avoid observation, might, at any other time, have attracted notice. But now all eyes were fixed upon the entree of the procession. This group consisted of a middle-aged, dark-complexioned, mercurial little woman of foreign aspect, clothed in black; a young man, with a tall and well proportioned figure, regular features, deeply-bronzed complexion and jet black hair and eyes, of somewhat sinister expression; an elderly, dignified, magisterial looking gentleman, and lastly—of a policeman who seemed to be retained in the service of the party.

As the bridal train entered the church, the little swarthy woman quickly averted her head and let down her thick black veil, and the young man stooped out of sight, as if to pick up something from the floor. The magisterial-looking individual put on his spectacles, and regarded the train with an ambiguous half-smile; while the police officer looked on with unconcealed curiosity. When they had passed the pew, the little restless foreign woman plucked at the sleeve of the young man and pointing to the procession now approaching the altar, exclaimed quickly, under her breath,—

"Look you, Victoire! Can you bear this, then?"

"No matter, Madame! I wait!" said the Frenchman, with a wicked smile.

"Will you not stop this, then?"

"No, no Madame! I wait!"

"For why, you wait?"

"For that she *de*spise, she *ab*hor, she scorn me—the convict! Very well!—I make her to be also convict herself!" hissed the man between his closed teeth.

Meanwhile the bridal train proceeded up the aisle and formed before the altar in something like the following order—the old Duchess of Graveminster and Sir Parke Morelle, leading the way, filed off to the extreme right; Lady Morelle and Lord Dazzleright, following, passed off to the left; next came the bride and bridegroom who took their places in the centre; then their attendants, coming up in pairs, divided and formed on either side—the bridesmaids filling up the segment of the semi-circle between the bride and her mother, and the groomsmen occupying the corresponding space between the bridegroom and his father-in-law.

The sun shining in rich, deep-toned glory through the gorgeous stained glass Gothic windows on either side the high altar, never fell upon a more imposing bridal circle. There was the bridegroom, with his tall, well set, kingly form and most noble head and face, full of conscious power, and wisdom, and protective love; and the bride with her dark, bright, wondrous beauty and her matchless grace;

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[*] The only hours during which a marriage could be legally solemnized in England, were, until very lately, as they may be now, from 8 A. M. to 12 M.

and the stately bridemen and the fair bridesmaidens—

"Each a queen by virtue of her breast and brow;"

and there were the dignified Sir Parke, the regal Lady Morelle, the haughty old Duchess of Graveminster and the splendid Lord Dazzleright. And there within the altar rails before the aisle stood the venerable Bishop of Exeter, between two assistant clergymen. And all—congregation, companions and officiating ministers, were regarding with looks of admiration, affection, or pride, the presence of the beautiful bride.

The Bishop opened the book. And every whisper was hushed, and every eye reverently dropped as the venerable prelate, in a solemn voice, pronounced the first words of the imposing ritual.

"Dearly beloved, we are gathered together, here in the sight of God, and in the face of this company, to join together this man and this woman, in holy matrimony; which is commended of St. Paul to be honorable among all men; and therefore is not to be entered into unadvisedly, or lightly; but reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly and in the fear of God. Into this holy state these two people present come now to be joined.

"If any man can show just cause, why they may not lawfully be joined together, let him now speak, or else hereafter forever, hold his peace."

The Bishop now made the usual solemn pause during which not a breath seemed drawn in the silent church.

Though had any one been sufficiently near that ill-omened group in the shadowy corner pew, they might have caught the deep, hurried whisper of the woman—

"Attend you, Victoire!—listen, then, my son!" And the hissing reply of the man—

"Yes, Madame!—but mon Dieu! I wait!"

Meanwhile the rites proceeded—the grave voice of the prelate was pronouncing the question—

"George Charles, wilt thou have this woman to be thy wedded wife, to live together after God's ordinance, in the holy estate of matrimony? Wilt thou love her, comfort her, honor and keep her in sickness and in health; and forsaking all others keep thee only unto her as long as ye both shall live?"

The Bishop paused.

And the bridegroom, fixing his eyes in unutterable love upon the downcast, beautiful face of his bride, in a deep, proud, tender voice responded—"I will."

Then the same question being put to her, she lifted her large eyes for an instant to his, and a glow of ineffable devotion suffused her beautiful, dark face as she too breathed the same vow.

At the next question—"Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?"—Sir Parke Morelle stepped forward, took the hand of his daughter and placed it in that of the Bishop who transferred it to the hand of the bridegroom. Lord Montressor received the cherished gift reverently, tenderly, with a deep inclination of his noble head, and a thrilling pressure of his clasping hand.

Then followed the putting on of the ring, and then the prayers, the valedictory, and finally the nuptial benediction.

The imposing solemnities were over.

And friends gathered around with blessings; and then came in turn, the grave, earnest, tender, gay or gallant forms of congratulations—as the officiating ministers, the father, mother, bridemaids and bridemen pressed around with many kind wishes.

This occasioned some considerable delay, in the midst of which the ominous party in the dark corner pew might have been observed to steal out and retire from the church.

"Enough! enough!" at length smilingly said Sir Parke, sympathizing with the blushing embarrassment of the recipient of all these compliments, and taking her hand and placing it upon the arm of Lord Montressor, who drew it closely to his side, bowed around to his friends, and turned to lead his bride from the church—a performance more easily to be wished than accomplished; for the people were now pressing out of the pews, and the aisles were choked up with the crowd. Thus their progress from the altar to the door was an alternate step and pause—a sort of stop-march. And thus a delay of more than half an hour intervened between the moment of their receiving the nuptial benediction and that of their issuing from the church door. As the church, the yard was crowded with people of all classes, eager to see the bride pass.

The whole party, including the officiating bishop and clergymen, were expected to return to Hyde Hall to partake of the wedding breakfast; after which, Lord and Lady Montressor were to set out for his lordship's castle in Dorsetshire, where they intended to pass the honeymoon.

The church-yard was so crowded that it was with great difficulty and after much hindrance that Lord Montressor's carriage could be driven up. And with his shrinking bride upon his arm, and her friends around, he waited before the church door, until it drew up, and one of the footmen alighted, let down the steps and opened the door.

His lordship then bowed to his friends, and was about to hand his lady into the carriage, when a policeman, pressing through the crowd, placed himself between the carriage door and the bridal pair, intercepting their further passage, while he respectfully inquired—

"Which of these ladies, here present, bears the name of Estelle L'Orient?"

"*No* lady here bears that name; stand out of the way, sir," said Lord Montressor, haughtily, while Estelle, with a half-suppressed cry, lowered her veil and leaned heavily upon his arm.

"Let us pass, sir!" repeated his lordship, sternly.

"Pardon me, my lord, if in the discharge of my duty I cannot obey your lordship," answered the officer, who, in manners and address seemed much superior to his class.

"What mean you, then, sir?" gravely inquired Lord Montressor, while Estelle hid her face in the folds of her veil against his arm.

"My lord, I have a warrant here for the arrest of one Estelle L'Orient, and if I mistake not, this is the lady," said the officer, indicating the bride by a respectful inclination of his head towards her.

"Yes! Mon Dieu, that is the woman!" exclaimed a shrill voice, coming from the little old dark and shrivelled Frenchwoman, who stood at a short distance in the crowd.

"Eh! Mon Dieu, yes!—that is *my* woman!—that is *my* bride!—that is the wife of the felon!" exclaimed the vindictive looking Frenchman by her side, gesticulating the while like a madman.

A crowd of astonished faces now pressed closely upon the group, around the carriage-door, before which stood the policeman. And through this crowd, as one having authority, now came Park Morelle, inquiring in haughty displeasure—

"What is the meaning of this delay? Good people give way! My lord, in the name of Heaven, put Lady Montressor into the carriage, and drive on! Let us get out of this! Why Montressor! Estelle! what the fiend is the meaning of all this?" exclaimed the baronet, perceiving now for the first time by the pale, corrugated brow of the bridegroom, the shuddering form and hidden face of the bride, the resolute bearing of the policeman, and the horrified looks of the people, that something—he guessed not what—was fearfully wrong.

"What is the meaning of all this? Montressor, why do you not speak?" he asked, in an agitated voice—when, turning haughtily upon the police officer, he demanded—

"What is *your* business here?"

"Excuse me, Sir Parke Morelle, I am here on duty."

"*What* duty, fellow?"

"I am charged with a warrant for the apprehension of one Estelle L'Orient!"

"Whom?" frowningly demanded the baronet.

"One Estelle L'Orient—this lady."

"Out of the way, fellow! you are drunk! and richly deserve to be sent to prison! There is no such person here! Out of the way, I say, or I shall give you in charge!" exclaimed the baronet, losing all patience.

"Pardon me, Sir Parke, but I must execute my warrant," persisted the man; then stepping forward and laying his hand upon the shoulder of the bride, he said—

"Estelle L'Orient, I arrest you in the king's name; you are my prisoner."

"*Sirrah!*" thundered Sir Parke, striding forward and striking off from his daughter's shoulder the desecrating hand of the policeman—"Are you frantic?—have you the least idea of what sacrilege means?—do you know what you are about?"

"Perfectly well, Sir Park Morelle! I am about to take this lady into custody," said the officer, approaching his prisoner.

"Begone, fellow! or by Heaven!—mad or drunk, you shall dearly rue your mistake."

"*Sir Parke Morelle mistakes*; but he will not resist his majesty's warrant," said the man, drawing the instrument from his pocket; and—while the crowd pressed closer around in amazement and wonder—Sir Parke stood the picture of incredulous astonishment and rage; and Lord Montressor, with corrugated brow and compressed lips, continued to support the form of Estelle, who now stood with clasped hands, white face, and stony eyes, gazing upon the figure of the Frenchman as upon that of a phantom raised from the dead—the policeman unfolded and read the warrant.

County of Devon.—To the Constable of Hyde and all other peace officers in the said county of Devon:

Forasmuch as Gabrielle L'Orient, widow, now in this said county, hath this day made information and complaint upon oath before me, George Bannerman, one of his majesty's justices of the peace, in and for the said county, that Estelle L'Orient of the said county, on this Thursday of the first instant, at the parish church of the parish of Hyde, feloniously intermarried with George Charles, Lord Viscount Montressor, in and during the life of her husband Victoire L'Orient now, living in these realms—these are, therefore, to command you, in his majesty's name forthwith to apprehend and bring before me, or some other of his majesty's justices of the peace in and of the said county, the body of the said Estelle L'Orient, to answer unto the said complaint, and to be further dealt with according to law. Herein fail you not at your peril. Given under my hand and seal, this first day of May, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and——.

Signed, George Bannerman.

The officer finished the reading, folded the document, returned it to his breast-coat pocket, and stood for a while waiting. No one, who had not seen, could imagine the consternation that held the assembled crowd in a trance of breathless silence. Sir Parke Morelle was the first to break the fearful spell.

"Madam!" he said, striding up and confronting his wretched daughter, whose conscious looks were the most alarming features in the case—"why do you not speak! if this is a conspiracy, expose it! where is the wretch that has made this complaint!"

"Here, my lord! Behold me! I am that wretch! I depose! I witness! that Madam Estelle L'Orient is the wife of my son, Monsieur Victoire L'Orient," exclaimed the wicked looking little French woman, whom Sir Parke now saw and recognized as the quandom governess of his daughter. Beginning to perceive the truth, the baronet turned upon his child and inquired, in a tone of suppressed fury—

"Madam! answer! What foundation is there for this trumped up story?"

"*It is true*," said the wretched Estelle, letting her arms fall by her side and her chin drop upon her breast, with a look of utter despair!

"Do your duty, officer! Remove your prisoner! Take the *feloness* quickly out of my sight!" cried the baronet, nearly maddened by the shock that had so suddenly hurled his towering pride to the dust.

"Sir Parke! Sir Parke! in mercy, you will not abandon your child in her extremity," pleaded Lord Montressor.

"By all the demons, sir, she is no child of mine! I renounce the wife of Monsieur Victoire L'Orient!" cried the baronet, striding away.

"Sir Parke, for the love of God! *look on her!*" prayed Lord Montressor, laying his hand on the arm of the enraged father, and seeking to detain him.

"Release me, sir!" thundered the baronet, breaking from his clasp—"My carriage there, sirrahs! Where is lady Morelle? Let her ladyship be summoned."

"Lady Morelle has fainted, and has been conveyed into the church, my lord," said the Duchess of Graveminster, who had remained standing in an attitude of stern and solemn haughtiness.

Sir Parke left orders for his carriage to come up, and then strode off in the direction of the church.

Lord Montressor sought to reassure the deserted and despairing woman at his side.

"Estelle! dear, suffering one, take comfort; all that a Christian man may do for you, in your extremity, shall be done by me; rely on me; I will never fail you."

"Monsieur, the constable! look at that woman. She has no right to be on the arm of my lord. Do your duty!—arrest her!" exclaimed the Frenchman, with vindictive haste.

"I fear I must not long delay, my lord," interrupted the policeman, respectfully.

"One moment, officer, if you please. Madam! for the love of the Saviour, sustain this poor, stricken one, until I send a clergyman to attend her. Estelle, dearest! I must, for your own sake, leave you now. I go to send you proper aid. I will see you again at the magistrate's—until then, farewell," said Lord Montressor, gently withdrawing his sustaining arm and laying her upon the half-repellant, haughty bosom of the Duchess of Graveminster.

"God forever bless you, my lord! Whatever becomes of poor Estelle—may God forever love and bless you!" murmured the poor girl, waving him adieu.

Lord Montressor hastened into the church and into the vestry, where the Bishop and assistant clergymen were taking off their robes.

"My lord!—*what* has happened?" exclaimed the venerable prelate, almost appalled by the pale and haggard countenance and hurried and anxious manner of his lordship; while the two assistant clergymen approached and *looked* the wonder they forbore to speak.

Lord Montressor hastily and briefly related all that had passed; together with the history of the wretched marriage into which Estelle, while a child, at school, had been inveigled by the designing governess and her unprincipled son, with the account of the crime, trial, conviction, and transportation of Victoire, the long separation, and the final published report of his loss in the wreck of '*Le Duc D'Anjou*,' three years since.

"The warrant for her arrest was issued by Sir George Bannerman, a bitter enemy of her father. He must have taken the deposition and issued the warrant immediately after the marriage ceremony was concluded. He must have been on the premises for that purpose; for I saw his carriage leaving the church," said his lordship.

"I saw Sir George himself *in* the church," said the Reverend Mr. Oldfield, the elder of the two clergymen.

"*In* the church! then he witnessed the marriage, heard the solemn adjuration at its commencement, might have spoken, stopped the proceedings, and saved this most unhappy of ladies from her present misfortunes! Any but a malignant enemy would have interfered to save her!—The case will probably go to trial and come up at the next assizes; but there I am sure an action cannot be successfully sustained against her. And if the course of this magistrate has been as I suspect, that fact will be a powerful weapon in the hands of her counsel; and will also go far to hurl Sir George Bannerman himself, from his seat on the bench. Meanwhile, however, the father of Estelle has abandoned her to her fate. I, unhappily, through my late relations to her, am disabled from directly protecting her, my known intervention would be far more likely to injure than to benefit her cause; but you, reverend sirs," continued his lordship, turning towards the two assistant clergymen, "you, Mr. Oldfield and Mr. Trevor, are friends of her family. Your age, holy calling, and position, all constitute the most proper and desirable persons to stand in the relation of protectors to this most unfortunate lady. Go with her to the magistrate's—will you not, sirs?"

The two ministers spoke together for an instant, and then Mr. Oldfield answered for both—

"Most willingly will we attend the lady, my lord; but had we not best object to a hearing before Sir George Bannerman, and demand that she be taken before some other and impartial justice of the peace."

"Upon the whole, *no* sir; it will make little difference, in the end, and I think it best that this man should be allowed to show his hand," said Lord Montressor; then tearing a leaf from a blank book on the table, writing a check for a thousand pounds on the bank of Exeter, and handing it to Mr. Oldfield, he continued, "offer bail to any amount for her appearance at court, and then, Mr. Oldfield, I am sure that you will take this poor, shorn lamb to your fold, put her under the care of your excellent lady, and bid her trust God with the result."

"We will certainly do all that can possibly be done for this poor child in her extremity; but—put up your check, my dear lord, for though you are her truest friend, it is not expedient that this good office should emanate from you," said the venerable man.

"I believe you are right, sir; but what then can be done, since her father abandons her?"

Again the two clergymen conversed apart, and then Mr. Trevor spoke—

"We are not bankers, my lord, it is true; but we can afford to risk some hundred pounds a piece."

"Risk, sir? There will be no risk—do you know Estelle, and imagine that she will not duly present herself for trial?"

"Certainly not—certainly not, my dear lord! The word was unhappily chosen. I meant merely that we might be held *responsible* for so much money."

"Go now, dear sirs, to that poor girl, lest the Duchess of Graveminster think her ermine irremediably tarnished by holding any longer that blighted head upon her bosom. I will meet you at the magistrate's."

"Use my carriage, if no other is provided, Oldfield; I will find a seat in Lord Montressor's, and be in attendance also," said the kind-hearted bishop, whose sympathies had been strongly moved. The reverend gentlemen thanked the bishop, and left the church in search of their unhappy charge. On reaching the yard they found that every carriage with the exception of that of Lord Montressor and that of the Bishop of Exeter, had left the scene. Yes—parents, friends, acquaintances, bridemaids and bridemen, all had fled the place as though the plague were there. The Duchess of Graveminster had departed with the rest.

Estelle was left unsustained, leaning for support against the upright headstone of an humble grave, and guarded by the policeman.

The pitying clergyman approached her, laid his hand upon her bowed head, and gently said—

"Be not so utterly cast down, my child; raise your heart to Him who—when 'all forsook him and fled', remained unshaken in his trust of his Father."

But the grief-stunned girl seemed not to hear, or see, or be in any way conscious of the presence of the speaker; she remained wrapped in her white robe and veil, leaning over the tombstone, perfectly motionless, and might have seemed some risen ghost or descended spirit standing at the grave.

"Come, come, my child, look up, give me your hand, let me put you into the carriage; there are some necessary forms to be gone through, and then you are free; and you are to go home with me to Bloomingdale parsonage, for a visit, until your father feels better and comes for you, as he will."

But still she neither moved, nor spoke, and might have seemed less a woman, or a spirit, than some draped marble statue.

"Come, my lamb, come," pursued Mr. Oldfield, taking her cold and passive hand, drawing it within his arm, and leading her away.

Very docilely she suffered herself to be placed in the carriage, when Mr. Oldfield entered and took the seat beside her, and Mr. Trevor followed, and placed himself on the front cushion. The policeman mounted the box beside the coachman, and the carriage was driven off. Almost immediately after, the Bishop of Exeter and Lord Montressor entered the carriage of the latter, and followed on the same road.

[To be continued in our next.]

Napoleon on Suicide.—"Some commit suicide," said the Emperor Napoleon, "through love—*folly*; others for the loss of fortune—*cowardice*; others that they may not live dishonored—*weakness*; but to survive the loss of empire and the outrages of our contemporaries, appears to me to be the best display of courage."

A Curious Fact.—It is a curious fact, that children are the best judges of character at first sight in the world. There is an old Scotch proverb; "They are never cannie that dogs and bairns dinna like;" and there is not a more true one in the whole collection

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A FORTUNATE RUIN

BY SYLVANUS COBB, JR.

George Ballerton sat in his room at his hotel. He was a young man of six-and-twenty; tall and slim of frame; with a face of exceeding intellectual beauty; and dressed in costly garments, though his toilette was but indifferently performed. He was an orphan, and for some years had boarded at the hotel. It required but a single glance into his pale features to tell that he was an invalid. He sat with his head resting upon his hands, and his whole frame would ever and anon tremble as though with some powerful emotion.

As the youth sat thus his door was opened, and an elderly gentleman entered.

"Ah, doctor—you are moving early this morning," said Ballerton, as he lazily arose from his seat and extended his hand.

"O—not early for me, George," returned Allyne, with a bright smile. "I am an early bird."

"Well—you've caught a worm this time."

"I hope 'twill prove a valuable one."

"I don't know," sighed the youth. "I fear a thousand worms will inherit this poor body ere long!"

"Nonsense! You're worth half a century yet," cried the doctor, giving him a gentle slap on the shoulder. "But tell me, George—how is it with Rowland?"

"Just as I told you. All is gone."

"I don't understand it, George."

"Neither do I," said the young man, sorrowfully. "That Charles Rowland could have done that thing I would not—could not—have believed. Why—had an angel appeared to me two weeks ago, and told me that Rowland was shaky, I would not have paid a moment's attention to it. But only think: When my father died, he selected for my guardian his best friend—and such I even now believe Charles Rowland was—and in his hands he placed all his wealth, for him to keep until I should become of age. And when I did arrive at that period of life I left my money where it was. I had no use for it. Several times, within three or four years, has Rowland asked me to take my money and invest it, but I would not. I bade him keep it, and use it if he wished. I only asked that when I wanted money he would honor my demand. I felt more safe, in fact, than I should have felt had my money been in a bank on deposit."

"How much had he when he left?"

"How much of mine?"

"Yes."

"He should have had one hundred and twenty thousand dollars."

"What do you mean to do?"

"Ah—you have me on the hip there."

"And yet you must do something, George. God knows I would keep you if I could. I shall claim the privilege of paying your debts, however."

"No, no, doctor—none of that."

"But I tell you I shall. I shall pay your debts, but beyond that I can only help you to help yourself. What do you say to going to sea?"

A faint smile swept across the youth's pale features at this remark.

"I should make a smart hand at sea, doctor. I can hardly keep my legs on shore. No, no—I must ——"

"Must what?"

"Alas! I know not. I shall die—that's all!"

"Nonsense, George. I say go to sea. You couldn't go into a store; and you wouldn't if you could. You do not wish to remain here amid the scenes of your happier days. Think of it: At sea you will be free from all sneers of heartless snobs, and free from all contact with things you loathe. Think of it."

George Ballerton started to his feet and paced the floor for some minutes. When he stopped a new life seemed already at work within him.

"If I went to sea what could I do?"

"You understand all the laws of foreign trade?"

"Yes. You know I had a thorough schooling at that in my father's counting-house."

"Then you can have the berth of a supercargo."

"Are you sure I can get one?"

"Yes."

"And the salary?"

"Two thousand dollars."

"Doctor John Claudius Allyne, I will go!"

* * * * * *

George Ballerton walked one evening to the house of the wealthy merchant, Andrew Wilton. It was a palatial dwelling, and many a hopeful, happy hour had he spent beneath its roof. He rang the bell, and was admitted to the parlor. In a few minutes Mary Wilton entered. She was only twenty. She had been waiting until that age to be George Ballerton's wife.

Some words were spoken—many moments of painful silence ensued.

"Mary—you know all. I am going upon the sea. I am going to work for my living. I am going forth from my native land a beggar. I cannot stay long now. Mary, did I know you less than I do—or, knowing you well, did I know you as I know many—I should give you back your vows, and free you from all bondage. But I believe I should trample upon your heart did I do that thing now. I know your love is too pure and deep to be torn from your bosom at will. So I say—Wait—wait!"

"But why wait? Have I not enough?"

"—sh! You know not, again, what you say. There are other feelings in the human heart besides love. That love is a poor profitless passion which puts aside all other considerations. We must love for eternity; and so our love must be free. *Wait.* I am going at work. Aye—upon the sea, at work!"

"But why upon the sea? Why away where my poor heart must ever beat in anxious hope and doubt as it follows thee?"

"Because I cannot remain here. Hundreds of poor fools have imagined that I shunned them because I was proud. They knew not that 'twas the tainted atmosphere of their moral life that I shunned. They gloat over my misfortune. Men may call me foolish; but 'twould kill me to stay here."

"Alas! must it be?"

"It must. You will wait?"

"I will wait, even to the gates of the tomb!"

"Then Heaven bless and preserve you!"

* * * * * *

The ruined youth was upon the ocean—his voyage commenced—his duties as laborer for his own daily bread all fairly assumed. Ah—it was a strange life for him to enter upon. From the ownership of immense wealth to the trade-books of a merchant-ship was a transition indeed! But ere he went on deck again he had fairly resolved that he would do his duty, come what would, short of death. He would forget that he ever did else but work for his livelihood. With these resolves clearly defined in his mind he already felt better.

At first our supercargo was too weak to do much. He was very sea-sick, and it lasted nearly two weeks; but when that passed off, and he could pace the vibrating deck with a stout stomach, his appetite grew sharp, and his muscles began to grow strong. At first his appetite craved some of the many delicacies he had been so long used to; but they were not to be had, and he very soon learned to do without them. The result was, that his appetite became natural in its wants; and his system began to find itself nourished by simple food, and in proper quantities.

For years he had looked upon breakfast as a meal which must be set out and partaken of from mere fashion. A cup of coffee, and perhaps a piece of dry toast, or some seasoned and highly-spiced tidbit, had constituted the morning meal. But now when the breakfast hour came he approached it with a keen appetite, and felt as strong and hearty as at any time of day.

By degrees the hollow cheeks became full; the dark eye assumed new lustre; the color, rich and healthful, came to the face; the breast swelled with increasing power; the lungs expanded and grew strong; the muscles became more firm and true; the nerves grew calm and steady; and the garments which he had worn when he came on board had to be let out some inches, in order to make them encompass his person. His disposition became cheerful and bright; and by the time the ship had reached the southern capes of Africa the crew had all learned to love him.

Through storm and sunshine; through tempest and calm; through dark hours and bright, the young supercargo made his voyage. In one year from the day on which he left his native land he placed his foot again upon the soil of his home. But he did not stop. The same ship, with the same officers, was going upon the same cruise again; and he meant to go in her. He saw Mary Wilton, and she would *wait*. He saw Doctor Allyne, and the kind old gentleman praised him for his manly independence.

Again George Ballerton was upon the sea; and again he assumed the duties of his office, and even more. He stood watch when there was no need of it, and during seasons of storm he claimed a post on deck.

At the end of another year the young man returned to his home again. He was now eight-and-twenty, and few who knew him two years before could recognize him now. His face was bronzed by exposure; his cheeks full and plump; his frame stout and strong, and erect like a forest chief. His muscular system was nobly developed, and the men were few who could stand before him in trials of physical strength. When he first left the city, two years before, he had weighed just one hundred and thirty pounds avoirdupois. He now brought up the beam fairly at one hundred and seventy-six! Surely he was a new man in every respect.

On the afternoon of the third day, as he entered the office of his hotel, the clerk handed him a letter. He opened it, and found it to be from Mr. Wilton. It was a request that he would be at the merchant's house at nine o'clock on that evening.

At the appointed hour George Ballerton entered the merchant's parlor. He found Mr. Wilton and Dr. Allyne there. A warm greeting ensued, and then the conversation was brisk and interesting.

"George," said the doctor, after the youth had given a full account of his adventures, "I should think you would almost forgive poor Rowland for having made off with your fortune."

"Forgive him?" returned George. "O—I did that in the first place."

"Well, George," resumed the doctor, "Mr. Rowland is here. Will you see him?"

"See him? See Charles Rowland? Of course I will!"

The door was opened, and Mr. Rowland entered. He was an elderly man, but hale and hearty.

The old man and the young shook hands, and then inquired after each other's health.

"You received a note from me, some two years ago," said Mr. Rowland, "in which I stated that one in whom I had trusted had got your money, and mine with it?"

"Yes, sir," whispered the youth.

"Well," resumed Rowland, "Doctor Allyne was the man. He had your money."

"How? What?" gasped George, gazing from one to the other in blank astonishment.

"Hold on, my boy," cried the doctor, while a variety of emotions seemed at work within his bosom. "I was the villain. It was I who got your money. I worked your ruin, my boy. And now listen, and I'll tell you why:

"I saw that you were dying. Your father died of the same disease. A consumption was upon you,—not a regular pulmonary affection—but a wasting away of the system for the want of vitality. The mind was wearing out the body. The soul was slowly, but surely, eating its way from the cords that bound it to earth. I knew that you could be cured; and I knew, too, that the only thing in the world which would cure you was to throw you upon your own physical resources for a livelihood. There was a morbid willingness of the spirit to pass away. You would have died ere you would have made an exertion, from the very fact that you looked upon exertion as worse than death. It was a strange state of both mind and body. Your large fortune rendered work unnecessary, so there was no hope while that fortune remained. Had it been wholly a bodily malady I could have argued you into the necessary work for a cure. And, on the other hand, had it been wholly a mental disease, I might have driven your body to help your mind. But both were weak, and I knew that you must either work or die.

"And now, my boy, I'll tell you where my hope lay. I knew that you possessed such a true pride of independence that you would not depend upon others. I knew that if you were forced to it you would work. I saw Rowland, and told him my plans. I assured him that if we could contrive to get you to sea, and make you start out into active life for the sake of life, you could be saved. He joined me at once. I took your money and his, and then bade him clear out. You know the rest. And now tell me, my boy; if I give you back your fortune will you forgive me? Your money is safe—every penny of it—to the amount of a hundred and fifty thousand dollars. Poor Rowland has suffered much in knowing how you looked upon him; but I know that he is amply repaid by the sight of your noble, powerful frame, as he sees it to-night. And now, George—are we forgiven?"

It was a full hour before all the questions of the happy friends could be asked and answered; and when the doctor and Rowland had been forgiven and blessed for the twentieth time, Mr. Wilton said,—

"*Wait!*"

He left the room, and when he returned he led sweet Mary by the hand.

Late in the evening, after the hearts of our friends had fairly begun to grow tired with joy, George asked Mary how much longer she was willing to wait. Mary asked her father, and the answer was—

"Two weeks!"

Reputation.—No species of reputation is so cheaply acquired as that derived from death-bed fortitude. When it is fruitless to contend, and impossible to fly, little applause is due to that resignation which patiently awaits its doom.

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ROBERT BONNER, Editor and Proprietor.

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ARTS OF PEACE.

If the nineteenth century is particularly distinguished by any one feature, it is by its sympathy with, and encouragement of, the useful arts. Europe, it is true, is red with recent bloodshed, but her late revolutions were not so much the offspring of the love of war—such love as in other centuries has delighted in battle as a pastime—as of a climax of wrong heaped by the few upon the many, and made insufferably visible through the spreading triumphs of the arts of peace. The expansion of human knowledge is the expansion of men's sense of their own rights, and the nurse of deeper desire and ambition to assert those rights. Knowledge depends greatly in its circulation upon the freedom of the arts. In our country the unmuzzled press, the time-and-tide defying steam, the electric wires, and all-powerful commerce, have diffused, and are diffusing political, religious, and social truth, wherever civilization is appreciated.

The intercourse of nation with nation, leads to the interchange of ideas and habits, and transfuses through the circle of never so differing races a common feeling of interest and sympathy. Nations have indulged antagonism, because they were kept by natural or artificial boundaries wide apart. Steam and lightning have broken down natural boundaries, and trade and travel, from a thousand points, rush over the old defiant spaces and barriers, to a common centre. Knowledge has broken, or is fast breaking down artificial divisions, and caste and creed no longer forbid the intercourse of commerce and travel—the sure destroyers of whatever is opposed to the natural freedom and interests of man.

From the moment men of various nations mingle in the marts of trade and knowledge, their tendencies to hostility are broken down; they see that they have feelings and interests in common, and that war and feud are neither the happiest, nor the most profitable of pursuits; that wars and feuds have, in fact, been the game of selfish tyrants, to whose foolish quarrels and mad ambitions the peoples have been sacrificed. What quarrel, truly, has the human race with itself? Is it a bundle of "Kilkenny Cats," born to self-destruction? Not exactly! and the arts of peace are beginning to make men sensible of this fact; sensible that *brotherhood* is not a myth, and that henceforth they will unite to turn the earth to a profitable, happy account, rather than manure it with their blood and tears; for the growth of whips and fetters for their own wrists and backs.

What a glorious picture rises to the vision of fifty years of peace, with the human race turning its arts and energies to the culture of the earth, and the expelling of war and all its appendages. What a garden would spring from the wilderness, and what plenty heap every man's purse and crib, until want and wretchedness would be unknown. War is the desolater—the destroyer. War makes savages and brutes of men, and entails sorrow, slavery, debt and debasement. May it speedily fall before the advance of peace, and be blotted from the earth forever!

◆

SUNSHINE.

In the rules of health put forth, from time to time, for the preservation of health, we find much said about ventilation with the view of securing "fresh air," but little about sunshine. And we find the great majority of our people constantly and persistently avoiding the sun, and seeking the shade.

Now, shade is very inviting, especially in anticipation of passing the dog-days amid the brick and mortar barriers of a city. But, still, we cannot refrain from uttering our protest against avoiding the sunlight altogether! The rays of the sun are as indispensible to health as the breezes of heaven. People may manage to "live, and move, and have their being" in unrelieved shade—nay, even in constant darkness, as the experience of the subterranean dwellers of Cornwall testifies—for we are told there are thousands of children, born and reared in the very caverns of the mines, selected as the abodes of their parents, who have never felt the direct rays of the sun!—in commoner phrase, have "never seen daylight."

So will potatoes grow in your cellar. But is their growth a *healthy* one? Inspect the colorless and distorted vines they send forth to twist, and writhe almost visibly in search of yonder truant ray of sunlight, that has insinuated itself through some crevice in purest compassion! Look at the pale and sickly green of that shrub sprung from a seed blown by some "evil wind" into that other equally darkened prison-shop!

Take timely warning in behalf of your children, ye mothers! Never fear that "tanned" complexion, which was the theme of so many apologies, when your children returned, last summer, from the country. Rather rejoice, if there is a prospect of their losing their "beautifully white complexion" again! Its loss will be your little one's gain—for be assured that we but utter an important truth in physiology, too much overlooked, or sinfully disregarded, when we repeat that the direct sunlight is as indispensible as pure air. There can be no real health in the habitual absence of the one any more than of the other.

OPINIONS.

Two quite opposite notions prevail as to the right or duty of a free expression of opinions. One set of guide-men hold that no opinions should be expressed until they are fully matured; that is, until the person indulging them is morally certain he shall never thereafter find cause for changing them. The advocates of this limited sort of expression argue, that in no way do we so much and largely affect the destiny of those around us, as by our opinions. That, in proportion as our position and influence are powerful, we are looked to for the lead, and followed by all those lesser and weaker lights who may pin their faith to our opinions. They hold, especially, that in matters pertaining to the eternal well-being, it is of the utmost consequence that ideas be well sifted before they are uttered as convictions or opinions.

On the other hand, a large class hold, as they practice, that opinions may be uttered with safety to society, from first impressions. That the utterance of opinions, however crude and false, leads to their discussion and perfection. That we cannot begin to think, reflect or reason, without forming opinions, and that the surest way of improving our own, is to challenge the opinions of others. That all growth in knowledge comes from the expression of opinions formed from investigation, observation and experience, and, that if each were to keep his opinions to him, or herself, until there was a moral certainty of never being called to change them, the race would be eternally tongue-tied and dumb—for men are constantly changing their opinions, even in the latest hours of their lives.

There is some reason in both arguments. We hold that there should be a distinction made (which is not generally done) between impressions and opinions. An opinion, we take it, means, legitimately, a conclusion derived from a full consideration of the evidences bearing on a question. In most cases worthy an opinion, one may have impressions long before he can form deliberate opinions. Impressions may, therefore, be uttered with greater freedom and safety, for, in uttering them honestly we do not shut the door upon after evidence and conviction, as we should by declaring a fixed opinion. We believe, decidedly, that men's opinions, if entitled to respect at all, are the most powerful operatives for general good or evil, and that they ought to be weighed and considered accordingly. Yet, utterance is not to be forever denied because one is not sure he will never see cause to change his opinions. A man may always safely express his opinion, no matter what it is, if he can back it by good reasons, and honestly believes it. It may be false to all the world else, and yet be true to him. He has formed it from his own point of view, and his own circle of evidence, and he knows no other data until he challenges the opinions of others, and by discussion strengthens himself, or finds he has reasoned narrowly or falsely.

The policy of prompt freedom of opinion is another question, which we leave to the time-serving to discuss. By freely uttering our impressions and opinions, time and place being appropriate, we set in motion the machinery by which truth is evolved. We bring reason in contact with reason, compare experience and data, and get at the aggregate conclusions of society on great questions. We make the light of myriad minds shine on the subject, which else would reflect but our single glimmering reason. The only requisite, is that we should have good reason for the opinions we express, and feel a readiness to modify or renounce them, as enlarged evidence may demand. He who utters an opinion regardless of reason, is a dogmatist and a bigot. Nothing is more mean and debasing than the clinging to an opinion, merely because we have heedlessly, or otherwise, uttered it, and are too self conceited to recant. There is no honest pride nor true manhood in persisting in the wrong, whether in act, impression, or opinion. We go for free speech, and that is largely made up of impressions and opinions, but we go, also, for holding one's self ever ready to be set right, if his opinions can be fairly proved premature or wrong.

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THE "ALMIGHTY DOLLAR."

We shall not deny what has become current, as a phrase of contempt, in some parts of the world, that "the American loves the 'Almighty Dollar.'" But we do deny that he loves the dollar, for itself, in half so base and mean a sense as will apply to people, or to classes, at least, in other countries. The American knows the value of a dollar, as a means of purchasing comfort, luxury, and consideration. He estimates its worth precisely, as an agent of power and influence, and in all his grasping by enterprize, speculation or craft, he counts the dollar only as a means to an end, which end is, as a general rule, free indulgence in whatever taste, passion, or prejudice, may with him be uppermost. The American does not hoard his dollar, like the German princes and decaying nobles of the old world, that he may have a princely sum to boast of. He spends it with the left hand as he wins it with the right, in generous living, and his friends and neighbors are freer to share of it, as gift or loan, than the friends and neighbors of man in any other country on the globe.

Much as the American loves the dollar, even as a means, and hard as he may scratch to get it, he would not, as landlord, beggar his tenants like a Marquis of Lansdowne, and then drive them from their homes, to keep up his position and extravagance in foreign lands. Nor would he exact it from semi-pauper vassals, like the rotten race of feudal aristocracy, who, inheriting the plunder of robber ancestors, grind the faces of the toiling and the poor. If the dollar is anywhere salted and kept as a god, it is not in America—at least not by Americans. We could put our finger on the real dollar worshippers, whose mercenary spirit is only rendered more mean by the hollow and cheap display they make of family and position to the world. There are money-grasping races, who for ages have grasped by every means, simply to hoard. Lust of money for itself, is their life and soul. But they dwell not on our side of the Atlantic.

Money is one of the spurs, if not *the* great sinew of success, in an age when strife for pre-eminence in every department of human industry and enterprise is so common and combative as in ours. With money, commerce, the arts, peace, war and every temporal phase of the race, are shaped and guided. Money commands gratification for the mass of human desires, high or low, and the American is not ignorant of its value—the surest modes of getting it, and the most profitable means of using it. In so far as it serves him he is in the market to bid for it; but he is neither its worshipper nor its slave. He does not mould it into a stationary idol, and set it up in niches of his house and heart. No! he shivers the idol which others may worship, and barters the fragments for generous, rational enjoyment. Sometimes he bestows it, in charity or sympathy, upon the famishing or down-trodden of the Old World. That he *can* acquire dollars *most rapidly*, we believe, and this may somewhat account for the phrase hurled at him with such apparent contempt.

FRESH FERN LEAVES.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1855, by Robert Bonner, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Southern District of New York.

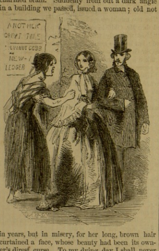
WAYSIDE WORDS.

I wonder is there a country on the face of the earth, where the Almighty is oftener called upon to send to perdition the souls of those who offend its inhabitants? Every where that horrid imprecation, so familiar that it is unnecessary to shock you by writing it, meets the pained ear. I say pained, because I, for one, cannot abhor it less on account of its frequency, or consider it less disgusting, because it filters through aristocratic lips. Every where it pursues me, in crowded streets, on ferry boats, in omnibusses, and, I am sorry to say, in ladies' parlors, which should afford a refuge from this disgusting habit.

From old men,—whose toothless lips mumble it almost inarticulately; from those who would resent to the death any question of their claim to the title of gentlemen; from young men, glorious else, in the strength and vigor of youth; and sadder still ——from little children, who have caught the trick, and bandy curses at their sports. *An oath from a child's lips!* One would as soon expect a thunderbolt from out the heart of a rose. And yet, there are those who deliberately *teach* little children to swear, and think it sport, when the rosy lips, with childish grace, lisp the domoniac lesson.

An oath from a *woman's* lips! With shuddering horror we shrink away, and ask, what bitter cup of wrong, suffering and despair, man has doomed her to drink to the dregs, ere she could so belie her beautiful womanhood.

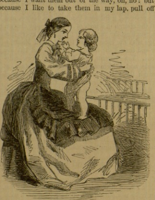
One lovely moonlight night, I was returning late from the Opera, with a gentleman friend, the delicious tones I had heard still floating through my charmed brain. Suddenly from out a dark angle in a building we passed, issued a woman; old not in years, but in misery, for her long, brown hair curtained a face, whose beauty had been its owner's direst curse. To my dying day I shall never forget the horrid oaths of that wretched woman as she faced the moonlight and me. Perhaps I had evoked some vision of happier days, when she, too, had a protecting arm to lean upon; sure I am could she have read my heart, she would not have cursed me. But oh, the wide gulf between what she must have been and what she was! Oh, the dreadful reckoning to be required at the hands of him who defaced this temple of the living God, and left it a shapeless, blackened ruin!



Fanny Fern.

FOR THE CHILDREN
WHO READ THE NEW YORK LEDGER.

I like to put little children to bed at night; not because I want them out of the way, oh, no! but because I like to take them in my lap, pull off their shoes and stockings, kiss their white, dimpled feet, and put on the loose, white night robe, in which they look so charming, and so pure. But when they look up in my face, and ask, "Now, shall I say my prayers?" I always say No, because I do not believe in *saying* prayers; and when they use that expression it always seems to me, as if they wanted to hurry them over so as to have done with them; that's why I say No, don't *say* your prayers; don't mumble over a string of words as you would repeat "The house that Jack built," or Peter Piper Pipkin. That is not praying; your Father in heaven knows you are not in earnest; that you mean nothing by it. Suppose you were nearly starving, should you go to any person and dance and sing as you asked them for food? Of course not; they would think you were mocking; so does God, when you *say* your prayers, as you call it. He knows very well when you are in earnest; and He looks at that, not at the length of your prayer. A great many people pray, who never speak a word; did you know that? Suppose your heart is full of trouble, and you are in a crowded street, or car, or omnibus; must you wait, —wait it may be for hours, till you can get upon your knees, before your dumb prayer can go up to God for help? Oh, how blessed that we need not wait! Else, what would thousands of poor creatures do, who are driven to and from their tasks like beasts of the field, and like them drop wearily down, when the day is done. What would *they* do, my little ones, when tried, tempted and discouraged, if a sigh, or a tear, or an upturned eye were not in God's sight a prayer? Little children, such prayers as these go like swift-winged messengers to heaven, while the long—dull—meaningless prayer dies—where it was born—on the parrot lips.



Fanny Fern.

HEARTINESS.

My reader has doubtless heard of that celebrated young gentleman who gave his whole *mind* to the tying of his neck-cloth, and consequently achieved the highest possibility of a knot. In this instance, perhaps, "the paltry prize was scarcely worth the cost," nevertheless, it is a good rule to give one's mind heartily and wholly to whatever work we have in hand. I know it is the fashion to laugh at men of *one idea*; but, notwithstanding the sneers, no great achievement is ever wrought without the attention being first held down and pressed against its object—

> "Through long, long days of labor
> And nights devoid of ease."

Did Beethoven hear those wonderful melodies, destined to be an everlasting joy, without listening for them in his soul, and having all his mortal energies absorbed and wrapt away from the jar and tumult and conflict of the world without! Does the astronomer, "when a new planet swims into his ken," recognize the speckles in the stone at his feet? or the botanist, sitting among his flowers, observe at the same time the shifting clouds? To do our work in masterly fashion, we must not only be engaged in it deeply and devotedly, but we must also, at the same time have a hearty love of it.

"Happy is he," says Goethe, "to whom his business itself becomes a puppet, who at length can play with it, and amuse himself with what his situation makes his duty."

I have a genuine respect for that man, however humble his calling, who takes pride in it, and keeps his tools in order; and a corresponding disrespect for him who sneers at his trade, and does his work in a slovenly fashion. The subjoined lines were written under the inspiration of this sympathy and aversion, and entitled—

THE POET TO THE PAINTER.

Painter, paint me a sycamore,
A spreading and snowy-limbed tree,
Making cool shelter for three,
And like a green quilt at the door
Of the cabin near the tree,
Picture the grass for me,
With a winding and dusty road before,
Not far from the group of three,
And the silver sycamore tree.

'Twill take your finest skill to draw
From that happy group of three,
Under the sycamore tree,
The little girl in the hat of straw
And the faded frock, for she
Is as fair as fair can be.
You have painted frock and hat complete!
Now the color of snow you must paint her feet,
Her cheeks and lips from a strawberry bed;
From sunflower-fringes her shining head.

Now, painter, paint the hop-vine swing
Close to the group of three,
And a bird with bright brown eyes and wing,
Chirping merrily.
"Twit twit, twit twit, twee!"
That is all the song he makes,
And the child to mocking laughter breaks,
Answering, "here are we,
Father and mother and me!"
Pretty darling, her world is small,
Father and mother and she are all.

Ah, painter, your hand is still!
You have made the group of three
Under the sycamore tree,
But you cannot make all the skill
Of your colors say, "twit twit, twee!"
Nor the answering, "here are we,
Father and mother and me."
I'll be a poet, and paint with words
Talking children, and chirping birds.

Alice Cary.

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LITTLE CHILDREN.

The exclamation of the Master was, "suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not." Who can doubt the full intent of him who uttered those words? Meant he only to apply them to those immediately around him, in his earthly lifetime? And was the injunction, so beautiful in the assurance, "for of such is the kingdom of Heaven," appended to it, limited to sufferance? Not so have the true disciples, nor the world even, interpreted. From the pulpit and in humbler places, the words of the Master have been re-uttered these eighteen centuries past, since Christ came to infuse the balm of healing into the bruised soul of man, to assuage man's sorrows, and to lighten and cure man's mortal griefs and ills.

Re-uttered, but not in the spirit of the Master. Christ saw, what the true "Son of God" must ever see, that only in the heart of the child, yet unsullied and unengrossed with error, prejudice and conceit, is the field wherein light, and truth, and love, can be sown with the largest promise of rich and glorious fruitage. The child, so near like the cherub, ever imaged to us as a native of heaven; so like the angels, which have hovered in our most beautiful dreams, and which the grossest and least spiritual of us cannot shake off nor scare from the memories of our own sinless childhood—in such a child, save a fraction the type of all children, Christ saw not only tenantry of heaven, but redeeming spirits for earth. He sublimed that eternal truth which we perceive and utter in homely maxims, "The child is father of the man," and "As the twig is bent the tree's inclined," and however he labored and strove to draw men unto him, and toward one another, he cried, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven."

And Christ meant not only that they should be suffered to come, but that they should be directed and brought to him, and to that truth which was to represent him when he should be called personally from the earth. Under his mild and beautiful teaching, and under the light and warmth of his radiant spirit, he knew the mortal child-bud would expand into a divine, immortal flower; the flower of perfect justice, truth and love; and that the man born of that flowering child-bud, divinely crowning humanity, would be all for which earth and the mortal state were made. Little children—in them, of all human agencies, is the richest promise and the best hope of the world. When, over all the earth, their hearts are once drawn in unison to the Master; to his life, and lessons of love and truth; the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of God's children—men, and the sons and daughters of men—then will wrong and evil cease; then will sorrow be ended; then will joy cover the earth and the heavens descend, even as Christians pray, that angels and men may no more dwell apart.

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OUR NEW CONTRIBUTORS.

In accordance with our recent promise, we this week introduce to the half-million readers of the Ledger two new contributors, whose names have long been illustrious in the world of letters—George D. Prentice, Esq., who prepares our Humorous department, and Mrs. Southworth, whose new story will be found on our first page.

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A Merchant of this city who was on the verge of bankruptcy, took a walk one day with his cashier, who had grown rich and built several fine houses in a fashionable avenue. In his pride of heart he showed his employer his palatial dwellings and asked triumphantly "What do you think of that?" "I think," said the merchant after a pause, "that *you had better take my business and let me act as cashier!*"

WIT AND HUMOR.

PREPARED FOR THE LEDGER BY GEO. D. PRENTICE, ESQ., OF THE LOUISVILLE JOURNAL.

It has been said that there is no royal road to learning, but an instance is on record where such a road was laid out. A young prince being too lazy or stupid to learn his alphabet by the usual process, twenty-four servants were placed in attendance upon him, each with a huge letter painted upon his stomach. Not knowing the names of the servants he was obliged to call them by their respective letters when he wanted their services, and this, after a while gave him all the literature that he was supposed to need for the discharge of the royal functions.

We believe that the debating societies have never decided the question as to which was the noblest instance of filial affection on record—that of the Roman daughter, who nourished her imprisoned father when condemned to be starved to death, from her own breast, or that of the Irish son, to whom, when he was about to enlist in the army, his weeping father exclaimed, "Ah now, my darlint, would you be laving your poor ould father, you, the best and most dutiful of all my children, and the only one that never struck me after I was down!"

It is said of Father Mabillon, who throughout his youth and early manhood was noted for his stupidity, that at the age of twenty-six he pitched against a staircase, fractured his skull, was trepanned, and afterwards possessed a luminous understanding. Perhaps other stupid fellows might as well try the experiment. At any rate no great harm could be done.

Some folks are silly enough to disregard all good advice, unless he who gives it lives fully up to his own precepts. This is just about as smart as it would be in a traveler to scorn the directions of a finger-post, unless it drew its one leg out of the ground and hopped after its own finger.

The Minnesota Pioneer wants to know whether, if the devil were to die, the newspapers would not eulogize his character. If they didn't, the editors would be very likely to get unceremonious orders from some of the relatives of the deceased—"stop my paper."

Almost every political editor is apt to congratulate himself that his party will get a majority in the elections, but the editor of a paper, now before us, boasts in a tone of exceeding exultation that his party will get *two-thirds* of a majority.

An alderman has been properly enough defined to be a functionary, whose abdomen, like some of the streets of a city, is widened at the expense of a corporation. A wisdom tooth is oftentimes the only wise thing he has in his head.

A neighbor of ours complains that the New York Ledger is habitually stolen from his door. We condole with him. He complains that a couple of scurrilous papers are stolen from him in like manner. We condole with the thief.

Adversity certainly has its uses, and very valuable ones, too. It has been truly remarked that many a man, in losing his fortune, has found himself and been ruined into salvation.

Mrs. Mary Troone, of Brazoria, has been convicted of slandering her neighbors. A good many unconvicted *Pol-troons* of the other sex are habitually guilty of the same offence.

"The Counsel on the other side has lied on me," said a lawyer at the bar, "and I will dodge no issue presented by him." "Then take *that* issue," replied the other, hurling an inkstand at his head. But he dodged it.

A gentleman, if aggrieved, has a right to pull a blackguard's ears, but he should on no account cut them off. They should be left on for the accommodation of other aggrieved parties.

There is no singular number to the word alms, as if to teach us that a solitary act of charity hardly deserves the name. Our bounties, to be available, must be in the plural number.

The knowledge which profligate men have of the world would make them more dangerous than they are, were it not that the world for the most part soon comes to know them as well as they know it.

The safest of all possible loves for vain young men is self-love. In the first place, it is a source of great delight to them, and in the second, they can generally indulge it without the least fear of a rival.

We have heard of but one man, who, living a great number of years, did not become old. That was "middle-age Hallam."

It is thought to be a question worthy of consideration whether a person, whose voice is broken, is not on that account better qualified to sing "pieces."

It has been said that grain is treated like infants. When the head becomes heavy, it is cradled; and it is generally well thrashed to render it fit for use.

The Chicago Journal says that we must in these days of wonders be surprised at nothing. But when should we be surprised if not in the days of wonders?

There is a good reason why a little man should never marry a bouncing widow. He might be called "the widow's mite."

When we see a pretty female foot, we naturally conclude that it belongs to a beautiful woman—on the principle that "all is well that ends well."

It is very well that the youth of our country should *get high*, but they should do so just as the oaks do—by drinking water.

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CURRENT ITEMS.

It is rumored that when the Atlantic Telegraph comes into operation, the leading two-cent daily papers of this city will raise their prices to three cents, and it is said that one of them will even shoot up to five cents a copy. The expense of a message from London to New York will be a dollar a word; at that rate, a paragraph of a hundred printed lines would cost about a thousand dollars—a sum which seems to alarm some of our publishers. But what is a thousand dollars? A metropolitan daily journal should not be afraid of ten times that sum for a telegraphic message from the other side of the world. We expend on the single item of *advertising this number* of the Ledger alone, some fifteen thousand dollars, to say nothing of all our other expenses.

A grocer in Brooklyn being obliged to remove an unsound head from a hogshead of molasses, standing on the sidewalk, the other day, preparatory to putting in a new head, was quite astonished at seeing a small boy suddenly tumble into it. He hastened to pull the little fellow out, who walked off, leaving a trail of "linked sweetness long drawn out" behind him. It seems that the greedy urchin had climbed upon the edge of the hogshead to feast upon its delicious contents, and losing his balance got a surfeit of sweetness.

A woman having left a child—(a little girl three weeks old)—in an Iowa hotel, a short time ago, quite a competition arose among the childless parents thereabouts as to who should take possession of the "little stranger." The dispute was finally settled by a "raffle," and the winner bore off his prize in triumph.

A few weeks since a hunter in Wisconsin found the dead bodies of a couple of large stags, partially decayed, lying in the forest, with their horns inextricably locked together. It is supposed that they had closed in deadly strife, and getting their horns inseparably entangled, had perished from exhaustion and hunger.

It is reported that Monsieur Gillard, a French chemist, has at last succeeded in extracting illuminating gas from water, and that the ancient city of Narbonne glories in a light the elements of which are drawn from its beautiful and antique canal.

A Portland (Me.) paper says that an aged maiden lady (74 years old) was recently carried to the work-house in that city, who has many wealthy relatives, one of whom was taxed $14,000 this year on his real estate.

There is more building going on this Spring in New York than on any previous season, and all the edifices are also far more costly than those usually erected heretofore. The buildings now under contract are estimated to cost over three millions of dollars.

The maple sugar crop of the whole Union is estimated at 68,500,000 lbs., worth $8,562,000, which is very nearly equal to one-half the product from the sugar cane in the United States last year. New York produces more sugar than any other State in the Union, except Louisiana.

The reports from California are highly favorable, and those who profess to know say that more gold will be dug from the mines this season than on any previous one. These reports, however, *may* originate with interested parties.

An old soldier named Peters, who served under Napoleon in Egypt, died a short time since at Arnheim in the Netherlands, aged 112 years.

Four whalers arrived at New Bedford on one day, a short time since.

"I AM AN HUSBANDMAN."

The Prophet Zechariah.

BY MRS. L. H. SIGOURNEY.

'Tis better Earth's fair gifts to take,
Of fruits, and corn, and hay,
Than in her cold, unwilling arms
'Mid all the pomp of war's alarms
Her slaughter'd sons to lay.

Better the food of man to win
From her consenting mould,
Than fiercely, with a miser's zest,
Ransack and rend her shrinking breast,
For glittering stones, or gold.

Yes, better that on lowliest tomb
The simple phrase appears—
"*I am an husbandman*," than claim
From History's scroll, a despot's name,
And rear, though nations call it *fame*,
A cenotaph of tears.

THE WIDOW OF TOLEDO.

A TALE OF "LOW BIRTH AND IRON FORTUNE."

BY DR. S. P. BRONSON.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1857, by ROBERT BONNER, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Southern District of New York.

[For the benefit of our *new* readers who have not read the preceding chapters of this singularly interesting story, we will state, in order that they may understand it, that the heroine, Donna Isabel de la Montera, was an accomplished widow, surpassingly rich and beautiful, who lived in the ancient city of Toledo in Spain, and was beloved by all the gallants of that city. She had a Secretary named Leon Varella, who, though supposed to be of humble birth, was the handsomest, bravest and most accomplished gentleman in Toledo, and was passionately beloved by Ximene, the favorite waiting woman of the widow, but who himself cherished a secret and deathless love for Donna Isabel. Leon's father, who was in truth a distinguished nobleman—Don Garcia de Vega—in disguise, and for whose apprehension a heavy reward had been offered by the King, was the head woodman and manager of the widow's country estate. The Arabian horses of the Viceroy having run away with his carriage, plunged into the river Tagus, whence Leon rescued His Excellency at the hazard of his own life, and then hastily retired before any one recognized him. The Viceroy, on being restored to consciousness, was exceedingly desirous of learning by whom he had been rescued, but nobody could tell him. At last, a witty, thieving varlet named Pequilo, who was always on the lookout for means of replenishing his purse, discovered who the rescuer was, and by his impudence got a large reward of the Viceroy for disclosing his name. The Viceroy then sends his carriage of state to bring Leon to the Palace; that very morning Ximene tells the widow of her love for Leon, and extolls his superiority over all the widow's own admirers, the Viceroy's carriage arriving while she is pouring out her laudations. The widow is astounded on hearing that her Secretary had performed the daring feat with which all Toledo had been ringing for the last twenty-four hours, and for the first time particularly noticing Leon's beauty and noble mien as he walks to the Viceroy's carriage, she falls desperately in love with him, and she and her waiting-woman thus become rivals. But, notwithstanding Donna Isabel makes repeated and prolonged visits to her Secretary's office, under pretense of examining papers and accounts, to give him a hint of her affection, Leon does not mistrust the truth, although his own love grows constantly deeper and stronger. Previous to this, the Marquis de Sorbano, a lover of the widow, had challenged Juan de Mendoza, (a rival and the son of the Minister of Justice,) and slain him in a duel under a large sycamore in the forest; the only witness of the fight being the knavish Pequilo, who having overheard the appointment for the duel had hidden himself in the branches of the sycamore, with the intention of rifling the body of whomever should be slain. He does rifle the pockets of Mendoza, and therein finds certain documents whereby he learns that Leon's father is the proscribed Count Garcia de Vega; he subsequently sets out to wring hush-money from the unfortunate nobleman, but the Count, in the disguise of a Franciscan friar, adroitly turns the tables upon him, and makes him give up the documents, from which he learns that imminent danger threatens him. In the meanwhile, the Viceroy suspecting that the Minister of Justice is plotting to oust him from office resolves, on the advice of Don Jerome the superintendent of the provincial treasury, to engage Leon and Pequilo in his service, to help circumvent the machinations of Mendoza. This is the situation of affairs at the commencement of the following chapter.]

CHAPTER X.

THE MARQUIS IN A FIGHTING HUMOR FOR THE SECOND TIME.

THE Count de Perez called, one morning, after breakfast, on his friend the Marquis de Sorbano, whom he found in his chamber, cooling himself with an iced sherbet—a drink to which he invariably resorted whenever he had the spleen.

"What now?" asked the count, throwing himself on a fauteuil, and glancing with laughing significance at the sherbet.

"Take some wine," said Sorbano. "I was about to set out for your lodgings. I have news for you!"

"Good or bad?" inquired the count.

"Hear and then judge. Donna de la Montera is of late much given to loitering in the office of her secretary."

"Leon's?"

The marquis bowed, and then looked at him with an air that said, "What do you think of that?"

"Is this your news?" said the count, with a dubious smile.

"It is," replied Sorbano. "But it would seem, from your eye, that you had heard it before?"

"Ten days ago, at least!" returned the count. "I had it from my valet, who is on courting terms with one of the fair widow's maids."

"Ten days ago?" repeated the marquis, looking hurt. "And yet you kept the intelligence from *me?*"

"Why, man," returned the count, laughingly, "if I had learned that the lady had changed her shoe tie, ere going to vespers, would it have been compulsory on me to hasten to *you* with the intelligence?"

"And do you attach no more importance to this new movement of the widow's than that?"

"So far as *you* are concerned—no! Why, man, the lady has a perfect right to look into the details of her property without incurring scandal or your displeasure! You would not think of calling her out for it, I hope?"

"Have done with your badinage. I am serious."

"In what?"

"Coming to the bottom of this."

"With all my heart!" said the count. "But do not ask me to join you in the task. I care for women too little, to rack my brains in discovering the key to their countless whims! But I see you have been meditating upon this mountain—what conclusion have you arrived at?"

"This: that, for all your mirth, the widow is attracted to the secretary's office by something more than a mere desire to 'look into the details of her property.'"

"Good; that is a hit at me. But I am not deeply injured—therefore try it again, and when, in my judgment, you make a decided hit concerning this freak of the widow's, I will let you know."

"I have already given you my opinion," said the marquis, impatiently.

"Which," laughed the count, "is founded only on your jealousy. Bah! the kitchen view is the most reasonable."

"Whose kitchen's?" asked the marquis.

"The widow's own, to be sure. Tomaso, my valet, states that the kitchen is divided as to whether the lady is examining the secretary's cash account, previous to sending him adrift, or inspecting the particulars of her estate, for the satisfaction of some illustrious suitor. As for myself," added the count, "I side with the latter."

"And I with neither," said the marquis. "It is Leon that takes her there. I know it—feel it!"

"Fiddle-de-dee! She is a proud patrician, and rich—he, a parvenue, and poor. The idea of her wooing him is ridiculous!"

"I don't think so," said the marquis, with characteristic stubbornness.

"Granting that you do not," returned the count; "what then? Will that bring you to the true cause—or, better still, will it put an end to the lady's lingering at her secretary's? If neither, then of what avail is your opposition?"

The marquis bit his lips. He had looked for sympathy, and found only ridicule.

"Bah!" cried the count, observing him. "Ere I'd give myself uneasiness concerning the doings of the fairest she that ever wore petticoats, I'd borrow a fish-woman's garter and hang myself with it from the gable of the market-house!"

"I am still persuaded of the correctness of my suspicion," said the marquis.

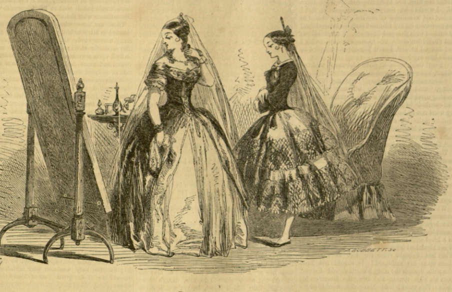
"Be it so!" returned the count, shrugging his shoulders. "But what then? Will you say to the widow that she must not visit him—must not love him—must not notice him? Or, is she still the owner of untold thousands, and her own mistress?"

"No man shall wed her but myself!" cried the marquis, striking the table with his fist. "I have said it!"

"Now, by St. Francis! jealousy has cracked you!" exclaimed the count. "What if the widow, who, as I think you've told me over and over again, gives you only the poorest of poor encouragement, should refuse to recognize your right to interfere in her affairs?"

"I would still do it!" returned the marquis. "Aye, and compel her, too, by dint of perseverance to respect my right!"

"You would?" said the count, observing him with surprise.



THE ENCOUNTER OF THE WIDOW AND THE WAITING-MAID.

"I would!" answered the marquis, with pale but quiet firmness.

"What a selfish egotist it is!" muttered the count. "I shall have to cut him—that's flat! Now, by St. Francis! Sorbano," he said, aloud, "you are of a persistent make. But the fair dame of whom we speak is doubtless equally as proud, and, if you were to take so novel a stand, she would be more than likely to shut her doors upon you!"

"Then she would open them again!" cried the marquis, in the determined tone of one who has been petted up to knowing no will but his own.

"Softly!" laughed the count. "In case you assumed so unwarrantable a position, it would be the duty of every gentleman in Toledo, whether married or single, to spring to the rescue of the lady fair. No, no—that won't do!"

"I have said it!" repeated the marquis.

"See what it is to come off victor in one's first duel!" said the count, with derisive gaiety. "Ever since you fleshed your maiden sword in the ribs of that insolent bully, Mendoza, you have grown as conceited of your own abilities as a young guardsman! Take a friend's counsel, and drop this folly; to cultivate it, will do you more injury than good."

"I know what I am about!" said the marquis, haughtily.

"Possibly! So does the miser, when he starves himself to feed his purse—the spendthrift, that wastes his patrimony in riot—the soldier, that disobeys the order of his general; but does his simple knowledge of what he is doing argue also for his judgment? A man may know what he is about, and still not know half as much as he might!"

"Cease your bantering, count, and tell me if I may count upon you for my friend?" said the marquis, in a tone of petulance.

"That depends upon what use you wish to make of me," laughed the count. "If to bully a woman, no; to fire her house, no; to carry her off, no; to injure her in any manner, no; to poison or waylay her husband or lover, no; to suborne her servants, no; to conspire against the church or state, no; to lead any gentleman into a snare, by which he may suffer in person, reputation, or purse, no; in all else—yes."

"I simply wish you to bear a message from me to Leon," said the marquis.

"To what purport?"

"To meet me to-morrow morning at daybreak."

"Why, what has he done?" demanded the count, in surprise.

"Is it not enough that I ask you to bear my message?" answered the marquis, testily.

"Not for me," said the count. "Ere I go upon an errand of life and death, I am so much of a woman that my curiosity to know the why and the wherefore must first be satisfied."

"You are very particular!" observed Sorbano, drawing himself up.

"When I die," returned the count, "I would not leave it in the power of my bitterest enemy to say that I had ever acted otherwise than as became a Spanish gentleman! In other words, I have so high a regard for the purity of my honor, that I will do nothing to sully it. If the quarrel that you seek with Leon—who owns as gallant a spirit as beats in any heart in Spain—is of a nature that you dare not explain, then, marquis, all I have to say is, that if you look to find a friend to aid you in bringing him within reaching distance of your sword, I am not he!"

"I have already said that Donna de la Montera shall wed none but myself!" exclaimed Sorbano, shifting in his chair with dogged impatience.

"And I heard it very distinctly, marquis. But what then?"

"I will fight whomsoever she may regard with favor!"

"That is, in plain Spanish, you view the lady's apparent attachment for Leon as a sufficient cause for his death?"

Sorbano answered with a cold bow.

The count looked grave.

"Are you aware, marquis," he asked, presently, "that *you* are not the ONLY man in Toledo?"

"What do you mean, count?" demanded the other, haughtily.

"This:" said the count, rising, and surveying him with a kindling eye, "that what you ask me to do is worthy only of some poor wretch who is all bankrupt of principles that I, from childhood, have been accustomed to revere as part and parcel of a true cavalier's religion. For making this request, Carlos de Sorbano, our friendship and acquaintance must instantly have an end. Should you feel disposed, however, to insist upon another interview, a note to that effect left at my lodgings will secure it at any time and place you may appoint. I have the honor, senor," he added, with a ceremonious bow, "to wish you a very good morning!"

"Come back!" cried the marquis, springing furiously from his chair.

"Excuse me!" returned the count, as he descended the staircase. "I have no wish to bandy words or weapons with you in your own house. But if, after siesta, I should encounter you on the plaza, I will do myself the pleasure and you the honor to—kick you!"

With these words, and a derisive bow, De Perez passed from the hall.

CHAPTER XI.

WHEN a man is assured of a flogging, or, what is tantamount to it—a good, sound kicking, and when he feels in his bones that the party promising the same is both able and likely to keep his word, he, however proud and self-sufficient, is rarely disposed to throw himself in that individual's way.

This was the case with the Marquis de Sorbano, who, knowing that his offended friend would be sure to look for him in the plaza in the afternoon, wisely concluded not to go there for several days, by which time he thought the count's anger would have sufficiently effervesced to make a chance encounter with him a matter of little or no danger. A quarrel with a man of the late Don Juan's calibre, and one with a soldier of the metal of the Count de Perez, were, as the young marquis correctly reasoned, two very different things. The former was simply an amateur, the latter a professional swordsman; and the marquis, like most egotists, preferred, when compelled, to measure his strength with men of the amateur order. Leon was one of these, and as Sorbano could perceive no very great danger in calling the secretary out, he resolved to gratify his malice by doing so without delay.

True, Leon was known at the gymnasium, of which the liberality of his late master had made him a life member, as a bold and brilliant master of the rapier; but then the late Don Juan enjoyed a similar reputation, and the marquis himself had also long been in repute as an expert handler of the blade.

True, again, there were those who, like the count, criticised closer than general opinion; who understood the various degrees of merit in the secretary, the younger Mendoza, and the conceited marquis; how much to allow for their respective depths of courage, how much for the native firmness and elasticity of their wrists, for steadiness of eye, springy flexibility of limb, and for command of nerve. The marquis himself, however, was not one of these; but what he lacked in fineness of perception, he made up in self-sufficiency; and though in the main, his vanity was comparatively harmless, yet, since his success in the affair with Don Juan, it had begun to assume proportions equally dangerous to himself and to others.

It was gymnasium hour, and thither he proceeded, as being the likeliest place to find a friend to bear his message to the new object of his jealousy and hate.

On reaching the gymnasium, he was equally delighted and surprised to perceive the secretary himself among a party of six, who were training their eye and hand to distance in pitching quoits.

The Marquis waited till the exercise was over, and the gymnasts had changed their costumes, when, catching the secretary's eye, he called him aside, and observed—

"You performed your part so well, senor, in the lesson from which you have just returned, that I should be glad to try you in one of a different kind to-morrow morning, at sunrise, behind the south-east wall of the Benedictine monastery."

"I have no cause of quarrel with you, marquis," returned Leon, blushing with surprise. "Nevertheless, as this proposal is evidently a premeditated thing, and shows a desire on your part, to force me, if needs be, into a conflict, I will not say you nay; and now, senor, having accepted your challenge, I should be glad to know why you have put it upon me?"

"I decline to answer!"

"Decline!" exclaimed the secretary. "Is this like a Spanish cavalier? You ask me to meet you at a certain place, and there contest our mutual claims to life, and refuse to tell me the reason? Is this manly, sir—generous—just? When two men go out to mortal battle, it is usual for each to know some cause, the inspiration of which gives additional nerve to his arm, and, at least in his own eye, makes his quarrel holy. And yet you expect me to dispense with this animating impulse? Proud lord, not so! If I am to be killed in fair fight by you or any other man, I first must understand the wherefore! And if I, to-morrow, should be asked by your parents why I have made their old age childless, I must needs be ready to reply!"

"You flatter yourself!" sneered the marquis. "I will see that my parents make no such demand!"

"I would insinuate nought against your courage or your skill, senor; but as history will inform you, courage and skill equally as great have, now and then, met their match, and been taught the folly of over-confidence! But a truce to egotism. Let us rather converse like men above all littleness, and alive to the measure and dignity of their years. If I have unwittingly done you wrong, give me to know it, and I will confess it and make reparation like a gentleman who has as tender a regard for his own honor as for what is due to others?"

He paused for a reply; but receiving none, his lip slowly curled with scorn.

The marquis was nettled at the expression, and drawing himself up, he arrogantly observed—

"Gentlemen are not to be interrogated by a vulgar upstart, whose only merit consists in his having pushed himself into the society of his betters!"

Leon's eye flashed with indignant fire, and a hot, sudden gush crimsoned his cheeks and temples.

"Upstart!" he exclaimed, in a voice that attracted all eyes towards them. "Liar! I am more than your peer, were you twenty times a marquis. Dost hear, proud lord—twenty times your peer, though you are a born lord, and I only a poor struggler for bread! Yea, so immeasurably beneath me do I deem you, that I should regard it as an infamy to own you for my slave; but that there may be no misunderstanding my appreciation of your manhood, I mark it upon your person—Thus?"

With the word, he spit upon the insolent patrician, who was spell-bound with mingled indignation and surprise, and then turned haughtily away.

Two rebuffs in a single morning are usually enough to try the temper of the best of men. But the cup of the marquis, who can hardly be said to have been very amiable, was yet destined to run over.

"What is it?" demanded the spectators, approaching him. "Why did Leon use you thus? What had you said—what done, to warrant this indignity?"

These, and fifty other questions—some of which were not over-flattering—were put to him without eliciting from his pale lips so much as one word in reply. In fact, he was literally dumb with mingled astonishment, mortification and rage.

On recovering his presence of mind, he wiped the offensive stain from his doublet, and drawing a short, fitful breath, quitted the gymnasium.

The spectators of the brief scene looked at one another significantly. Sensible of the mutual skill and courage of the pair, they felt that, ere twenty-four hours, one or both would have ceased to live. Gossip has a thousand tongues, and by midnight it was known throughout Toledo that the marquis and Donna de la Montera's handsome secretary were to have an affair somewhere at daybreak. We say throughout Toledo; but we mistake: the rumor had not reached the widow's, where, owing to an event, which we shall presently describe, the entire household was, notwithstanding, in a fluster of trepidation. As will shortly be seen, there were reasons, "divers and manifold," for the same.

The widow, ever since her new habit of visiting the office of the secretary, had scarcely spoken a genial word to her waiting-woman. Indeed, it would have been difficult to discover from anything in the lady's manner, that she had ever regarded Ximene in any other light than that of a mere creature that served her, and to whom she paid wages. All confidence and familiarity between them had ceased, and no allusion was made by either to the one topic that invariably rose, with renewed force, every time their eyes met.

Their position towards each other was far from agreeable; and the widow, sensible of her own great share in creating that unpleasantness, and pitying the waiting-woman's visible distress, would have been delighted to tell her so; while Ximene herself, instinctively conscious of what was passing in her mistress's heart, was fearful that she would give utterance to her wish, and thus forever separate her from her only possible hope of ever being able to attract the secretary's attention—namely, by being under the same roof with him.

And yet both felt that a plain understanding must sooner or later take place; and as day after day and week after week passed by, familiarity with this conviction gradually lessened it of its terrors till at length they, far from looking forward to it with dread, began to yearn for it with impatience.

The forenoon of the day which witnessed the incident at the gymnasium, was the one selected by fate for this important interchange of their regards.

It was just after breakfast, and while the widow, with the assistance of the waiting-woman, was making her morning toilet.

Both felt and knew that the hour at length had come when the long pent storm was about to burst. They had been conscious of it from the moment of rising, and now that it was at hand, they mentally braced themselves for the issue.

"You are looking paler than usual, this morning, Ximene?" said the widow, as, while surveying the general effect of her own appearance in the mirror, her eye caught the reflection of the waiting-woman's countenance.

"'Tis nothing, my lady," returned the latter, with a sad, bitter smile. "What matters the kind of color in the cheek of a poor, friendless girl!"

"A good deal—to herself!" said her mistress, calmly adjusting a troublesome ringlet.

"O, no!" murmured the waiting-woman, plaintively, "if, like me, she be one of the serfs of service. Though cast in woman's mould, *we* are not supposed to have woman's instincts, sympathies, feelings. Our business is to suffer—to be trod upon—to tamely submit to all manner of outrage, till our broken hearts lay us in our shrouds!"

The widow did not wish to understand her.

"You, at least, girl, have but little reason to complain!" she observed. "You are well paid for all you do; and are as well lodged and cared for as many a rich tradesman's daughter. What more can you—a mere servant—reasonably expect?"

"True, my lady! What more *should* I expect!" said Ximene, bitterly. "A 'mere servant' should be satisfied with her lot, and joyfully thank fortune that she is not one of those who regard promises to them as things that they may look to see performed!"

The widow colored; but it was as if in indignation at the stubborn curl, which obstinately refused to lie as she would have it.

"As you say, girl," she remarked with an assumption of careless indifference, "it is the duty of all good Christians, and particularly of those at service, to be contented with the lot in which God has placed them. They should never ape their superiors, never presume upon their positions, nor raise their eyes higher than their own level; such things are imprudent, and always end badly. If I were myself a servant, I should make it a point to look only for a servant's fare, and school myself to be content with it."

"We are not all generally wise, my lady; and worldly wisdom, they say, rarely takes up its lodgings with the poor, and hence they remain so. But—I ask it in all humility, my lady!—does cruelty always walk hand in hand with wisdom? If so, I'd none of it."

"I see no meaning in the question, girl. Explain!"

"The cruelty of the worldly wise who walk into the dwellings of the poor, and make them poorer still?"

"I am still in the dark!" said the widow, with the air of one for whom the subject had no interest.

"Say a seamstress, a kitchen-maid, or any other representative of the lowly, had a thing on which she placed great store, greater than all she had together. She found it perhaps, or was the first to perceive its brightness and its value, and took it home and laid it in a careful spot, and gazed upon it daily, hourly, aye, every moment of the day, till with seeing, thinking, and dreaming upon it, it became a part of her very being—and she felt that she had such a claim upon it as had none other in the world. For she had seen it first; had been the first to appreciate its excellence, to observe the sterling richness to which all other eyes were blind, and to treasure it according to its worth. It is hers by right—she knows it, feels it, and estimates it as her own, and as a jewel which she would neither give, nor loan, nor sell, for all other jewels in the world. But fancy the dismay, the heart-sickness that came upon her one day when another entered—another, that she had thought a friend!—and who, on being shown the precious thing, rudely snatched it up and bore it defiantly away!"

"What call you this precious thing?" asked the widow, who, having at last mastered the stubborn ringlet, stepped back to examine the general effect of her appearance in the glass.

"A *hope*, my lady," answered the waiting-woman. "It was the all of a poor girl—a friend of mine—who is at heart so bankrupt in her loss, that she can feel the ruin crisping the channels in her body as they one by one dry up."

"Perhaps her hope was without a reasonable foundation!" observed the widow, carelessly.

"It was her *all*, my lady. No, I forget. She had, too, the FUTURE; and time gives strength, and sometimes *reality*, to hope!"

The widow, having completed her survey in the mirror, now turned, like one ready for the fight, and, for the first time, looked her antagonist boldly and proudly in the eye.

The glance of the waiting-woman was modest but firm, like that of one conscious of the righteousness of her cause.

"Your friend," began the widow, "is a simpleton, or she would have run after her jewel, which in reality *as yet* was not hers, instead of sitting still and giving way to the dolors. She should know that such jewels must first be lost, ere they can be found—won, ere worn—owned, ere held. She could not *call* it hers, because she was the earliest to discover its richness; as well might the first passer-by claim ownership of the dazzling brilliant in a shop-keeper's window. And *had* it been hers, none would nor could have taken it from her; for the law that in such cases governs would have protected her in her right. Wherein, then, is she so grievously wronged?"

These remarks were like so many quick, hard, stunning thumps on the temples to the waiting-woman, who, losing her presence of mind, shifted the figure and struck out at random.

"But for me," she cried, shaking her head in tearful sadness, "you would have remained ignorant of his merits."

"Not so," said the widow, following her up. "Leon himself made them known to me, and to all Toledo also, the day before you called my attention to them."

"But you knew my heart was set upon him!"

"I did. But it was as upon a thing we sigh for, but—cannot get!"

"I had the future, and—the promise of your help!"

"Neither the future nor my influence would have availed you. Like the golden astragal of the Olympian temple, which was for him who could climb to and take it down, he is beyond your reach. You cannot pay his price."

"His price?" said the waiting-woman, bewildered.

"He is above you, girl! The eagle whose sinewy wings bear him upward till his form is lost in the cerulean shadow of the eternal sky, is not more the superior of the osprey whose highest flight is only to the nearest cloud!"

"We are both poor; and he, like me, an humble worker in the field of service!"

"Capricious fortune, who delights in vexing noble spirits, sportively threw him there. But he has a soaring nature, and will yet wring from her his proper place among men. Who mates him must have, like his own, a soul worthy of the sphere to which he, of right belongs, and to which he eventually will climb. Are *you* she—you, however worthy in all other respects, art still only a poor girl, without wealth, culture, ambition, influence, position! Fie upon you, girl! You are without sense, to think it!"

"And yet I *do* think it!" exclaimed the waiting-woman, with a flashing glance of pride. "I have a heart as brave as his or yours; feelings as sensitive and as deep; and a spirit, too, that, if needs be, would go for him I love to the uttermost ends of the earth. Can you boast of more?"

"You forget whom you are addressing!" said the widow. "But, no matter. Till now you have ever remembered your position, and as you doubtless think that I am somewhat to blame, I will overlook this fault. But be cautious: I may not always be so considerate."

"The means of redress are in your own hands," said the waiting-woman, half frenziedly. "You have but to say one word, and I shall be upon the world!"

The widow surveyed her a few moments, and then returned—

"But I will not say that word, Ximene. Notwithstanding all that has been said, I cannot forget that you are a noble, high-minded girl, and that I am indebted to you for many happy hours."

The waiting-woman started, and dropped her eyes in hurried confusion. She had not looked for this change in her mistress's mind.

"You fancy," continued the latter, "that if you had a fair opportunity, you could achieve Leon's conquest. Try it—the field is open, and you have my full consent to win and wear him, if you can. If you succeed, you shall not wive him dowerless. Nay, I am in earnest. Enter the lists with me in generous rivalry; and be sure of this, if he for whom we strive be the man I think him, my wealth will have no influence in his election. Why, what is the matter with you, girl!"

"His highness, the Viceroy, waits below!" said an attendant, entering.

"The Viceroy!" exclaimed the widow, in an under tone. "What can be his business with me! Surely, not as a suitor!" Then turning to the attendant, she said, aloud, "Look to Ximene—she is ill!" and then turned from the boudoir.

The sparring was over, and the waiting-woman was conquered, but in a way that she did not expect, and she reeled faintingly under the last blow. But generosity does not kill, and a little cold water and a gush of tears relieved her, and brought back her hope again, stronger and brighter than ever.

The whisper of the Viceroy's arrival flew like magic through the household, and great and profound was the excitement it produced. Now, the meaning of the widow's constant visits of late to the secretary's was explained; now, the kitchen understood why she was familiarizing herself with the details of her estate; now, they knew who the mysterious illustrious personage that so long had been expected, was; now, everything was out; now, cook wondered whether, after the marriage, she would be removed to the palace, to manage the culinary department there, or whether she should remain where she was; now, butler swelled up pompously, and already made up his plans relative to his office in the vice-regal mansion; now, gardner rendered himself ridiculous and unpopular by affirming it as his belief, that the Viceroy's visit had nothing to do with a marriage with the widow; whereat all hands solemnly declared that gardner never knew much, and now knew less than ever; and now, all but gardner were gigglesome with visions of speedy greatness and promotion and pickings, for all were confident that they should be removed to the palace, with the mistress, without delay; and in the height of his joy, butler kissed cook, and porter offered his hand to gardner, and gratuitously affirmed that he bore him no ill will, and laundress embraced chambermaid, and all promised to "stand by each other" at "the new house," and, for the mistress's sake, as well as their own, to do all in their power to sustain their respective positions with dignity.

The Viceroy, who seldom visited, was equally surprised and pleased at the stately air of mingled opulence and good taste that reigned around everything at the fair widow's. The garden, the house, the furniture, all spoke of that happy blending of ample means and good taste which the palaces of princes in all ages have been more ambitious to attain than successful in accomplishing—rarely reaching further than the former.

"The youthful relic of our late counsellor is well lodged!" murmured the Viceroy. "Here refinement contests the palm with luxury and plenty. 'Tis more than an Arcadia! I could almost be so low in soul as to envy her! What," he continued, musingly, "are pomp and splendor and retinue—which, after all, are only intended to overawe the vulgar—since they bring not with them the sweet balm of content? Give me, in preference to the tinseled shows, the hollow magnificence, and the anxieties of power, the tranquil repose and the calm enjoyment of modest competence!"

The widow entered, and gracefully welcoming him, remained standing according to etiquette.

"Pray be seated, madam," said the prince, "I am here as a visitor on sufferance, not in my official capacity. I fear," he continued, with a pleasant smile, "that when you have learned the nature of my errand, you will scarcely thank me for coming."

"That," returned the lady, "can better be determined when your highness shall have explained its purport."

"It is a favor, madam, that I would ask. Nay, be careful how you too readily say 'tis granted; for there is danger that I might hold you to your word."

"It is something of unusual importance, then, your highness?"

"I esteem it so, dear lady. But yourself shall be the judge. Your secretary——"

The widow started, while her cheeks became suffused with a scarlet blush.

"I see that I am denied already!" observed the Viceroy, with a slight smile.

"What is it your highness would say concerning my secretary?" demanded the widow, recovering herself.

"To ask him at your hands, madam," returned the prince. "He was made for a higher position than that which he now occupies; and I would give him an opportunity to mount to his true place. If you will let me have him, I will promise to watch over his fortunes, and to advance him as rapidly as his deserts will permit."

The widow looked down gravely, and began to think that the Viceroy was not very far wrong in stating that when she understood his errand, she would hardly thank him for the honor of his visit.

"I would not press you to an unwilling consent, madam," continued the Viceroy. "I can readily understand the young man's importance to you in managing your estate; but individuals of his mould are rare, and the state has need of them all. I would add, for your consideration, that I cannot but be sensible of my obligations to him as the preserver of my life, and that his interest shall be studied with paternal diligence. I am childless; and should he come up to my expectations, as I feel assured he will, I shall probably be tempted to make him my heir."

"I will think upon it, your highness," said the widow, after a few moments' meditation.

"Remember, dear madam," said the Viceroy, rising, "that your decision will have a serious bearing upon the young senor's fortune. Should you conclude to grant my request, I pledge you my word not to leave anything undone that will tend to make his career honorable alike to his country and himself."

"I shall remember, your highness."

"Thank you, madam. Adieu!"

The widow, though usually of a calm, self-possessed spirit, was now so bewildered that she could scarcely return his obeisance. She was like one in a dream. She threw herself back on a fauteuil to recover her coolness and to think.

The hot, quickening thoughts seemed to be galloping through her mind.

What! give up the man she loved; with her consent, to let him enter another's service? Never! She herself had work enough for him—could advance him, too; yea, raise him, in wealth at least, to a level with the proudest grandee in all Spain. What need had he then of governmental patrons? What had the state done for him to warrant a claim upon his manhood? It should not have him; no, though the King himself should descend from his high throne and beg the favor on his knees. She would hold him; yea, would maintain her right to him, while she could command a single crown to sustain her claim in law. None should have him; none but herself—NONE! Let the state go hang; let the Viceroy choose some needy adventurer—there are plenty at court!—for his heir, but he should not make a child of charity of LEON!

Was such shameless impudence ever known? What! come into her very house, and deliberately ask her for its chief prop? For how would her estates keep straight—her mortgages right—her interests reckoned—her taxes paid—her vast revenue even—her careless debtors prompt, without Leon's careful foresight and prudent hand? As well ask for her very income, as for the man that saw that that income never was behind. It was monstrous, indelicate, and unworthy of the meanest citizen, let alone of the first dignitary of the province, and he ought to blush for it!

"Let Leon *go?* She would lose every crown of her great fortune and sink into a pauper, first! Did she not love him; did she not design—fate not marring her purpose—to make him lord both of herself and of the vast revenue whose management he understood so well: would she permit a stranger calmly to step in and thwart her aim and hopes? No, as she was a woman!

"*Who* was the Viceroy, that he dared to come to her with so barefaced a proposition! It would scarcely be believed that he who had ever borne so excellent a name and who was so popular both with the nobility and the people that, aside from his position, all united in pronouncing him the first gentleman in Toledo, could be guilty of so gross an impropriety. Ugh! she could almost turn herself into a man and call him to an account at the end of a sword for his audacious impudence!

These were the thoughts that darted a-horseback along the highway of the brain.

The waiting-woman entered. The widow looked at her, inquiringly.

"Passing along the corridor, my lady, I fancied I heard you breathing as if in distress!"

"No, girl. But sit down near me. Would you credit it? His highness, the Viceroy, who has just taken his departure, had the hardihood to ask me for my secretary!"

"With Leon's knowledge, my lady?"

"I was so confused, that I did not inquire, but I think not."

"You declined—of course?" said the waiting-woman, eagerly.

"I told his highness I would reflect upon it."

"Which," said Ximene, turning pale, "he will interpret into a consent?"

"I think not, girl. But lest he should—get me writing materials—and quickly. I'll answer him at once! The messenger shall reach the palace upon his very heels! Take my Leon!" she muttered indignantly to herself, as Ximene turned from the apartment, "he shall take *me* sooner; and me he should not have, though the state and himself were crumbling to pieces, and one word from me could save them!"

"The writing implements, my lady!" said the waiting woman, re-appearing.

"Set them down upon this table, and summon Sancho."

"Sancho was a short, round, rosy youth of fifteen, with a face as innocent as a nun's, and, who, though almost always eating or asleep, yet, according to his own statement, was only running over an "Ave" with his eyes shut. When not out upon an errand, which his fat, oily limbs expedited in no time, he was invariably to be found devouring a slice of bread and meat in the kitchen, or seated in a niche in the wall, which had been originally designed for a statue, on the left of the back piazza, with his round bullet head leaning forward on his upraised knees, around which his hands were carefully clasped, in which position he would remain for hours as silent and motionless as a stone. He was the son of the sacristan of a neighboring church, and therefore claimed to be very pious. He woke easy, a virtue of which he was fully conscious, and on the strength of which he uniformly decided that he never slept at all. He never spoke except when he was spoken to, always performed his commissions, no matter how difficult, with promptitude and precision, and though known to hide a good deal of slyness behind his innocent air, he yet was a general favorite, with none however more than with the secretary and the waiting-woman, both of whom treated him with a kindness which he appreciated, and for which in his heart he was privately more grateful than appeared in his immoble features.

The waiting-woman went to the niche, where, with his head bent upon his knees, the lad was asleep as usual, and tapped him gently on the back.

Sancho's head instantly raised, his eyes opened, and the next moment he had slipped out from his resting place, and was standing before the waiting-woman, on the piazza, and looking up into her eyes with an expression of "Well, what is it?"

"Asleep again, Sancho?"

"Only saying an Ave," replied the boy, looking as bright as if he had been awake all day.

"Mistress desires you to take a message to—but herself will tell you where."

"I am ready," returned the lad, following the waiting-woman into the reception-room.

"This to the Viceroy!" said the widow, handing him a note. "Let not the grass grow under your feet. Fly—begone! Let his highness read and digest that!" she continued, as the boy disappeared. "We'll teach men modesty, when they do not know it already! And now, Ximene, that I have pushed aside this danger to our mutual hopes, *our* struggle commences. It shall be fair and open. I will take no ungenerous advantage of my position. I, from this hour, will abstain from my visits to the library. Nay, more: you shall have free access to the parlors at all hours, when Leon is at home. No thanks: it is my selfishness that suggests this; for if another on earth has it in her power to win him, I would not give my cast-away glove for his love!"

"Are you already engaged, then?" asked the waiting-woman.

"No. But I feel in my heart that he is to be mine."

"Has he told you so, my lady?"

"He has not. We have never spoken on the subject; nor does he know the character of my feelings towards him, nor yet the cause of my frequency in the library."

"And yet you feel that he is to be yours?" said Ximene, her lips quivering with the question.

"As that I am myself, girl!"

The waiting-woman looked down in thought.

"You think you are as fair as I?" said the widow, smilingly.

The waiting-woman blushingly raised her eyes. Such *was* her thought.

"Beauty alone will not win him," said the widow. "Nor yet beauty and wealth. You must be his equal in conscious nobleness and magnanimity. You must be able to sympathize with him in his conceptions, to meet his thoughts with thoughts, and not with a mere 'yes,' or 'no,' and to appreciate the great dreams and purposes of his soul. Should you not be able to do this, though more beautiful than fabled houri, he yet would deem you homely as an ogress; and though heiress to all the mines of Golconda, he would think you so poor that it were a charity to tender you an alms."

"Love inspires us as well as birth and wealth and education!" exclaimed the waiting-woman with enthusiasm. "Try you your refined powers, and I'll trust to those which nature has planted in the breasts of all the lowly!"

"You are sanguine!" said her mistress. "But I would not discourage you. The field is open. Enter and try your fortune! What now?" she demanded of an attendant.

"This, my lady, from a strange man at the door, who, on delivering it, darted hastily away!" said the latter, handing her a note.

The widow opened it, and read as follows:—

> "MADAM—A circumstance has transpired which renders my absence necessary. I therefore find it compulsory to resign my situation as your head woodman. To my first assistant, who is honest, capable, and intelligent, and whom I would recommend to your consideration for my successor, I have entrusted the schedule of my office, an examination of which will satisfy you of the fidelity with which I have discharged my duties. In tearing myself away from my home of two and twenty years, I feel an anguish which is rendered doubly terrible by the fact that I leave behind me the ashes of a wife whom I idolized, and on whose grave I, for long years, have every evening sat and meditated, conscious that her angel presence was near, and sympathizing with my musings. But my inexorable fate bids me away, and I must needs turn my footsteps to—I know not where. Favor me by showing this to my son, whom I commend to your kind care; and please to add also that I would write him personally, but that I am straitened for time. So soon, however, as I find an abiding place, I shall not fail to address him. With many thanks, dear lady, for the kindness you and yours have ever heaped upon my boy, and also for unnumbered favors upon myself, I bid you a respectful adieu—it may be only for a time, and perhaps, if my dark, persecuting destiny should so direct—forever. JUAN VARELLA"

"Something important, my lady?" said the waiting-woman, disturbed at the cloud which the perusal of the woodman's note brought up to the brow of her mistress.

"Read," replied the widow, handing it to her. "Well?" she added, inquiringly, as Ximene returned the missive.

"I know not what to think," answered the latter, uneasily.

"Leon is of nobler or baser lineage than we have thought him!" suggested the widow, for the purpose of drawing her out.

"Of what import is his birth?" said the waiting-woman, perceiving her object. "It is Leon himself with whom we are concerned—not his ancestors!"

"But if his father should prove to be some escaped felon, who could remove the stain?" slowly demanded the widow, with her eye fixed piercingly upon the maiden.

"That is something for one to think who fears the gibes of society," answered the waiting-woman. "But as for me, I am of an obscure class, and regard them not!"

"Nor I," observed her mistress, "and yet I am of society, and respect it! Now, let's see which of us is the braver—you or I. This letter, whose gloomy tidings will at once unnerve and most likely humiliate him, must at once to Leon, who will doubtless suppose the bearer to be familiar with its contents; and as it is not in human nature to like those who are aware of what is mortifying to our pride, he will thenceforth view the bearer with aversion. Now, who shall bear the note—you or I?"

Ximene blushed and hesitated. Conscious that in her case the young man's first impression would be everything, she instinctively recoiled from taking a step that promised to throw her into the shade when she only sought the sunshine. She therefore colored and hung back.

The widow smiled, and turning, with an air of derisive triumph from the apartment, proceeded to the library.

The waiting-woman saw her error in an instant, and bursting into tears, wrung her hands in humiliation at her defeat.

She would have run after her mistress and besought the privilege of bearing the letter at all hazards; but the consciousness of her mistake intimidated and restrained her; and the crushing thought came up in her throbbing brain that the widow already had reason to feel confident that she had in the waiting-woman a rival whom she need not fear!

Moral courage, which with some is prominent, with many only spasmodic, and in others only visitant at long intervals, generally had a fixed abode in the heart of Ximene; but on great and sudden occasions, when its presence was most needed, it abruptly, as in the present instance, temporarily took its leave. As she reflected upon this peculiarity in her organization, she was suddenly startled by the opening and closing of a distant door, and she knew that her competitor was face to face with the object of their mutual passion.

CHAPTER XII.

IN WHICH EVENTS TAKE A FAVORABLE TURN FOR THE WAITING-WOMAN.

The frequent visits of the widow to the library, and her long stays there had not been without their effect on the secretary, whom they severely tried.

Not, be it understood, that the lady's presence displeased him, nor that he for one moment wished her any place else; but there is a kind of magnetism which, though not set down among the sciences, sends throughout sensitive nerves an agony at once inspiring, delicious and overpowering; and this magnetism had been operating upon the secretary, and increasing in intensity, daily, from the hour of the widow's initial visit to the library, to that of her entrance with the woodman's letter.

There are those who, from various causes, are blunted to all sensibility; but then there are also many who are not. Of these, it is comparatively impossible for one in the spring-time of manhood to look upon a woman in the bright bloom of her youth, and grace, and loveliness without a sensation of mingled wonder and admiration. Especially is this true when he has an appreciating eye for the beautiful, and his heart, fresh and green as a blushing virgin's, is ripe for love's first impression.

If this be the result of a single glance, what then must be the result of being alone and breathing the same air with her for whole hours at a time, day after day? upon one whose heart has already gone out, and, in secrecy and silence, willingly submitted to the subduing influence of her charms?

Simple beauty is nothing, and has attraction only for the giddy and the unthinking; but when, as in the widow's case, it is accompanied by that feminine dignity of thought and deportment which shows that there is beauty within as well as without—or, in other words, that her mind is as lovely as her person, then, indeed, it strikes at the interior being of superior men who, conscious that it is the inviting exterior of an object worthy of their regards, instinctively do it reverence.

This was the kind of feeling that the secretary at first fancied he entertained for his mistress. But he learned ere long that the first impression had deepened till it reached the center of his being, and then he knew not what to say, to think—to do; for the lady was rich and high-born, and himself one of the great herd of lowly toilers on whom proud blood looks down in mocking pity and disdain.

How he struggled to resist the passion, and how he failed—with what energy he applied himself to labor and to study in order to forget—of his long, sad musings in solitary hours upon the hopelessness of his love—with what anguish, as he occasionally looked up from his monotonous toil, he, from the library window, beheld the arrival and departure of the gilded butterflies that had permission to plead their suits, whilst he, who, in all the elements of manliness, was greater than them all, was condemned by fortune to go unnoticed and unheard; it boots not to tell. Suffice it that, prior to the 'whim' that led the widow so often to the library, he was in that state of mind when men look forward with yearning to the hour when the tomb shall screen them from the further torments of malicious fortune. But the lady's whim, like 'the last feather that broke the camel's back,' was more than the secretary could endure. Its continuance would kill him; and he had an indefinite idea that if he relinquished his position and went out into the world, he might yet carve his way, step by step, up to a position that would authorize him to enter the lists with confidence for the heart and hand of the bright star, whose image was enshrined in every thought that illumined his mind.

These were the substance of the secretary's reflections while bending over his desk on the morning of the widow's entrance with the woodman's letter, and he had concluded—not, however, without a bitter pang—upon a plan of action that would place him, for a time at least, beyond the influence of her daily presence.

"I have just received this," said his mistress, laying the note before him with the assumed air of dignified indifference that she had adopted from her first visit to the library. "You will perceive, on reading it, the necessity of proceeding to Tzilla, at an early day, and installing the new manager into office."

Leon bowed without raising his eyes, and taking up the letter, perused it with varied feelings.

While he read, the widow could see that every word was sinking deeply in his mind.

She felt for him; but she was at the same time conscious that it would compromise her dignity to evince the slightest interest in the affairs of one so far beneath her in rank.

As for Leon, he did not look for sympathy in the crushing blow announced in the letter from one who could not be supposed to attach any importance to fortunes or misfortunes of persons so obscure in society's estimation as his father and himself.

"The poor," he murmured, bitterly, "who heeds or cares for *them!* What are *their* sufferings, *their* persecutions, that the opulent and the high-born should stoop to notice them!"

And yet he thought none the less of the widow for not manifesting any commiseration. He comprehended that her indifference rose solely from her respect for the exactions of the cold, proud order of which she was a member.

Leon felt that his proposed plan of action was encouragingly facilitated by the unexpected intelligence in the letter. And now, if ever, was the time to put it into execution.

And yet the thought unnerved him; for it was a sacrifice he proposed to make: a sacrifice that, even in its bare contemplation shook him to his heart's centre.

It was that of banishing himself from the sight of her whom he loved with all the passionate arder of a deep, high-spirited nature; from her who had a grasp upon his affections that inspired him to regard with mingled veneration and envy the very ground that received the impress of her footsteps: from her who to think of was Eden, to gaze upon—heaven.

"I, too, madam," he said, rising, and gracefully returning the note, "am compelled to resign my post, to thank you for the kindness I have ever received while in your employ, and, with a heavy heart to turn my back upon Toledo."

The widow did not start, nor blush, nor pale, nor look surprised. She simply bowed, and looked him in the eye with her customary air of mingled confidence and dignity. There was nothing in her manner or appearance to indicate that she was interested, in the slightest, either in his staying or going. She simply bowed, coldly—indifferently. But could her auditor have penetrated the feelings beneath that air of proud reserve, he would have unsaid his remark: for the lady was like one transfixed.

Going!

Was this the end of all her schemes, her hopes? *This!* Was he a man with a man's eye, and a man's mind, and could he not see into the meaning of her daily visits to his office? Could the flimsy pretext of her desire to know the details of her estate have been taken by him for a serious thing! Would any lady care to know about such things enough to give whole hours to them every day! And when she sat at the table opposite his desk reading deeds and mortgages, and interest statements, was it not plain to the dullest eye that it was his beauty she was observing—not the deeds, his face she was examining—not the mortgages, the expression of his orbs she was fixing in her mind—not the interest statements! Did ladies sit alone with their handsome secretaries simply to understand their fortunes? Or was it to give them an opportunity to take courage with the thought that to whom they gave their society they were not unwilling to give their hands, notwithstanding the disparity in rank! Could he not see that she was pleased to be in the library, or she would not have come there so constantly! And what could have been the attraction—dull papers about stale properties? Why, where were his eyes—where his sagacity? Must a lady say right out: "It is you that I have come to see—not the papers!' Why, any man, with half a mind would have understood her and saved her from such humiliation! Was it her proud, reserved air that chilled him off? If so, could he not see that it was all assumed, thrown up as it were like a rampart against any suspicion that he might chance to have of her woman's modesty! Scarcely one in a thousand but would have understood that when a lady is silent, she looks to be addressed; that when she asks a question of a handsome man, she expects it to be answered with more than monosyllables—yea by another question, to which she can respond with a remark that cannot fail to lead to a conversation—not upon rents, interests and estates, for what lady cares for them?—but upon topics more diversified, and that beget thoughts sunny to a lady's ear and lead her gently on to smiles, and coquetry, and frankness, and interview after interview, and in the end to a blushing confession more in looks than words, of her love! Why she had had the idea that men comprehended these things intuitively, and would not have needed a woman to instruct them. If *she* were a man, she would have known them from instinct! And could not he, whose mind was remarkable for everything but dullness, understand them also! What is the good of having a mind, an eye, if one does not use them? If *she* were a poor man, and a rich and noble lady should give her an opportunity to woo and win her, would she be so over-modest or so insensible to beauty and to fortune as to let the golden chance pass by unimproved? Not she. And was not *he* a man?

Going!

What! when competence and a high-born and loving wife were within his reach? Were beautiful women so numerous that they could be found at every step? Were fortunes so plentiful that they could be picked up, like pebbles, on the highway? Were well-paid secretaryships to be had everywhere for the asking? Did he—friendless and unknown—expect to make his way in the world of Spain without a patron—in Spain, where, as everybody knew or might know, adventurers without patrons waste their lives away in never-realized hopes, and in the end fall unnoticed and unknown?

Going!

Was the man mad? Mad he must be, or he would never think of leaving an easy place, good wages, and a comfortable home—of which, if he had the courage, he might be the master!

Going!

Where? From Toledo. Why, that is into the world's great whirlpool, in which so many are swallowed up, and never heard of after. Why not, if go he must—why not to some specific place, to which she could dispatch a confidant who could inform her from day to day of his progress in life's fierce struggle—of his looks, whether pale or healthful, haggard or buoyant—and of his spirits, whether sad or jocund?

Going!

From her! To where she could not see him, speak to him, think of him, when she wished! Was he mad—did he wish to kill her—had he no sense of the injury he would inflict upon her interests by such a step? Was he downright mad? What leave a home where he came and went as he pleased, and did as jumped with his humor, without let, hindrance, or question, and go out into the world where he would find himself hampered, checked, and annoyed in a thousand ways, without being able to right himself!

Going!

For what cause? Who or what had trespassed upon his sensibilities that he should think of such a thing? Men do not make great changes without cogent wherefores, and what was his for this? Had any of the household insulted him; if so, the offender should be summarily dismissed. Were matters not to his liking—they should at once be made so. Were his wages too low; they should be doubled, trebled, quadrupled, yea, raised to any sum he wished—would he but stay!

Going!

Why, there now. Her very blood, sympathizing with the grief of its owner, chills at the thought; and her heart, too, in pity for her fear, feels as if it had been riven from top to bottom, and through and through by a flash of flaming lightning; and the temple of her brain, as though some crushing, deadening weight had suddenly descended upon the roof.

Was he a man?—and though, with a staggering effort of her will, she retained her usual demeanor—*could he not see!*

Such were the thoughts that galloped swiftly through her fertile mind, as she looked the secretary in the eye.

Leon thought her cold. He had anticipated a slight air of surprise, and perhaps of regret; for, though by no means vain, he fancied that he had been of some slight service to the estate, and that it could not have passed unobserved; and also that his reason for leaving would be asked: in both of which he saw that he was destined to be disappointed.

"I am more insignificant than I had thought!" he muttered, bitterly. "Of what consequence is it whether one who is only a mere toiler is happy or unhappy, and whether he goes or stays? He is but one of the vast army of the poor, and his place can be easily supplied!"

Then addressing the lady, he said:

"My books, madam, are all made up for three months in advance, for the purpose of enabling my successor to gradually study his way through the system on which the accounts and correspondence are conducted, and also to give you, madam, time to make choice of a suitable person for my post. I, in addition, have drawn up a schedule of instructions to aid my successor in a clear comprehension of his duties, and arranged them with references in such a manner as to obviate the need of any more on your part, madam, than the simple placing of the schedule in his hands."

He paused, as if expecting a reply; but there was none.

A stranger, looking on, would have supposed that the widow attached no importance to what had been said by the secretary, upon whom her eye still rested with the same proud, indifferent expression, as though wondering at his audacity in supposing that a lady in her position could be interested for one moment in anything proposed by an individual so utterly obscure.

Leon felt hurt, and blushingly continued:

"Should it be your wish, madam, I will remain till you shall have chosen my successor, whom you perhaps would be spared the annoyance of inducting into office?"

There was no answer.

Leon colored with a sense of unmerited humiliation, and his fine features kindled with subdued resentment.

Could he at that moment but have looked in upon the heart of the fair patrician, and observed the bewilderment, the amazement, the grief, that chained her as in a spell; and, more than all, the proud modesty that feared to trust itself to speak, lest in its confusion it should say the wrong word, or one word too much, and thereby lose its dignity!

"I see, madam," he observed, "that you do not deem me worthy of even a momentary notice, and I will therefore no longer claim your attention. I would add, in justification of what might otherwise appear in your judgment, like undue haste, that I am driven into this sudden resignation, which indeed has been the thought of many days, but that I take my departure with the satisfaction that your interests cannot suffer by it, since I have left my books in a state that will give ample time for a familiar comprehension of his duties to him who shall succeed me!"

He would have said "farewell," but that he felt it would be viewed as impertinent in one of his condition. He bowed it, however, gracefully and with stateliness, and retired—leaving the widow, who could scarcely believe that she was not in a frightful dream, like one stunned.

But as the secretary disappeared, a species of desperation seized her. A sensation of dizziness ascended to her temples, but with a violent effort of will she forced it down again. Objects before her began to grow dim; but she wrenched them, as it were, back to steadiness, and taking advantage of the lucid moment, spasmodically exclaimed:—

"*Return, sir!*"

But too late—Leon, pale and chafed with mingled emotions, was already in the street.

"Did you call, my lady?" asked Sancho, who had just returned from his errand to the Viceroy.

"After Leon—quick, sirrah, and tell him I would see him. No, stay—follow him and let me know where he goes. Begone!"

The lad returned in about an hour, and found his mistress with Ximene in the reception room.

Sancho, who had a habit of never appearing to observe anything, and yet saw everything, noticed that both were pale and agitated.

"Well, sirrah?" demanded the widow.

"He is at the inn of the 'Three Poor Travelers,'" was the reply.

His mistress tossed him a piece of silver.

"That for your pains and silence, boy. Go."

The boy promised to be discreet, and two minutes later was fast asleep in the niche in the wall.

"I'll to my chamber for thought," continued the widow, turning to her companion. "Let me not be disturbed till dusk."

At dusk the waiting-woman was missing.

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT.]

SPRING.

BY TAMAR ANNE KERMODE.

Old Winter bends his hoary head,
And sighing wildly steals away;
His staff is quivering in his hand,
For lo! a maiden fair and gay,
Crowned with a wreath of opening buds,
'Midst which the zephyrs softly play,
Comes forth, and smiling on the Earth,
Asserts her magic sway.

Welcome!—sweet, gentle, beauteous Spring,
We welcome thee with joyful glee;
Beneath thy smile the buds will blossom,
The birds will warble merrily.
Beneath thy touch bright tender leaves
Will clothe each naked shrub and tree;
The streamlets freed from icy bands
Will homage pay to thee.

The songsters warned by Autumn's blast
To seek a warmer, sunnier clime,
Return to meet thee with their strains,
And offer music at thy shrine.
The insects' tiny, humming voices,
With the sweet tones softly chime;
The daisies spring up 'neath thy footsteps—
A flowery train is thine.

THE WIFE'S CONQUEST.

A TALE OF MYSTERY AND RETRIBUTION.

BY WILLIAM HENRY ERSKINE.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1857, by ROBERT BONNER, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Southern District of New York.

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

Eight days after the discovery and scenes narrated in the preceding chapter, the hero of our Tale, fully acknowledged as the son and heir of the noblest lord in France, by those who came in search of him, left the Astor Hotel with his wife and his mother, together with the inseparable Ambrose and Mary accompanied by the French captain and M. Cussac, to embark on board the steamer.

Old Diggon, who had been for months absent on the Newfoundland banks fishing, was present, and resolved never to forsake Vivien and Ambrose. The old sailor carried a valise and package, and his sea-roughened face was shining with joy.

As they drew near the wharf, and the carriage stopped for them to alight, Isabel's face became suddenly pale.

"See!" she exclaimed. "There is my—my stepfather! He sees us and looks as if he waited for us!"

"Fear him not!" said Vivien, as his eye fell on the haggard visage of Mr. Shenstone. This gentleman was wrapped to the breast in a cloak, and above the folds of it his face glared with fiery and vindictive light.

The whole party alighted. Isabel clung to her husband who carried their lovely infant boy. She was now rapidly recovering her former color and beauty! By her side was the Marchioness de Pontoise, still noble looking and beautiful. M. Cussac and the captain followed, while Ambrose, with Mary on his arm, followed towards the side of the steamship.

Suddenly Mr. Shenstone, with the looks and actions of a frenzied man, advanced and met Isabel and Vivien. He threw off his cloak and presenting a pistol in each hand, fired at the hearts of both in the same moment. M. Cussac, who had seen the intention, struck up his right arm andthe shot clove the air above Isabel's head. But the bullet from the other pistol passing close to Vivien's cheek shivered the glass of the carriage, but hurt no one. The madman was instantly seized, but struggling, broke from his captors and succeeded in escaping amid the crowd.

This incident for a few moments disturbed the whole party; but M. Cussac hastened on board, fearful of losing not only his prize but the large reward which he was to receive from the marquis if he should discover and bring him back his son.

The steamer at length got under motion, and bore our hero and his company swiftly down the noble bay of New York, leaving far behind them scenes and years of suffering as well as of happiness; for all days are not dark even to the miserable.

When, at length, after having been two or three days on board, and they began to realize the truth of their change of circumstances, and that all was not a dream, they commenced to discourse with wonder and gratitude upon the marvellous series of events which had conspired to bring to pass such great results. Vivien asked many questions, but sadly indeed, about his father, of M. Cussac. The latter also made known to him or rather to Isabel, (for his innate delicacy forbade his speaking to Vivien so openly of his father's wrong-doing,) the circumstances which led to the repudiation of the Marchioness.

"Your husband's mother," said M. Cussac, "was the daughter of the Count Desmoignes, a faithful soldier of the crown. She was beautiful, as you now see, and the marquis appeared to appreciate and love her. But it proved, it would seem, a match of policy on his side from ambition to unite the title and almost princely estate of the lands of Desmoignes to his own marquisate. The marriage for the first year or two went happily enough to the world's eyes; but at length it could not be concealed that the marquis loved, with a devotion that became not a wedded husband, the fascinating yet dowerless daughter of the Compte de Charonne."

"The end may be divined," resumed M. Cussac. "On the plea that the marchioness was a Protestant and the marriage therefore unlawful because not sanctioned by the Church, he openly repudiated her; and giving her a sum of money sent her and her son, your present husband, to England. I was his steward, and entrusted with their safe conduct, and to see that they were suitably provided and regularly received the sum which the marquis ordered quarterly to be paid to them. He immediately married in the Roman Church the daughter of Compte de Charonne. This lady, imperious and jealous, ultimately succeeded in persuading the marquis not only to withhold from mother and child their means of support, but, using his name, directed the boy to be taken secretly from the mother and carried to America, there to be left unknown, unnamed, to the charities of the world. You know the rest! The bereaved marchioness having learned that her abducted child had been seen in a boat being conveyed on board of a vessel, and having, by close inquiries, as she has now told me, found out that it had sailed for America, embarked as soon as she could find a ship also for the new world, under the name of Madame Eugenie."

"How wonderful, that she should, four years after, have seen her own son at the time he saved me from drowning, spoken with him, and yet not know him."

"Because," said Ambrose, who was seated near, enjoying the sea air, and rapidly convalescing, "he was dressed as a fisher's boy, browned by the sun and wind, and went by my name. Moreover, she saw him only for a moment, and when he was dripping with water, after rescuing Isabel."

We will not detain our readers by recording all their conversation; and how joy, and food, and happy hopes, and the healthy change of air, conduced to the recovery of those who, but two short weeks before, seemed on the eve of perishing from destitution, sunk to the lowest border of human misery! The abrupt and wonderful change had produced its effect upon Vivien as well as upon his lovely wife. He recovered his fine looks, his manly step, his cheerful spirits; while the bloom of beauty re-tinted her lately wan cheeks, and the light of peace and joy beamed anew from her dark eyes. The babe, which bore the name of "Ambrose," and was now nearly a year old, began to look more like the rosebud, which an infant ought to resemble, than a lily withered.

We will now anticipate the arrival of the happy party, and transfer the reader to the Chateau de Pontoise, thirty-one leagues south of Paris. As we approach it we pass through a pleasant vale with noble woodlands, above which, here and there, towers the roof of a castle, or the turrets of a convent, or the cross of a chapel. At the head of this charming vale, where a stream forms a small, romantic lake, rises a bold hill, clothed with larches and oaks, and crowned with a gray castellated pile, such as the warlike knights of the middle ages were wont to erect as strongholds. This is the Chateau de Pontoise. A solitary air surrounds it. Above its highest tower soars an eagle on moveless wings. A deer is perched upon a crag; and swans, wild with long freedom, swim and scream upon the dark waters of the lake in which the castle is gloomily reflected.

We pass a hamlet of peasants' huts by the base of the hill, forming a street on the lake shore. The occupants of the dwelling come out and gaze with strange curiosity upon us as we pass; for a visitor seldom now goes to the chateau. We ascend a winding and neglected road, adown which, centuries ago, the old lords of Pontoise had come with six hundred followers armed in steel, marching for the Holy Land. Now all was silent. A herdsman is alone seen with a few swine under his charge. The walls of the castle tower far skyward above our heads! At length we reach the plateau, and ascend the terrace which surrounds it. The view is wide and lordly. For leagues around the eye surveys the domain of the marquis. A portcullis is before us and raised, but the wicket beneath in the great gate is shut. We cross the ancient bridge of stone, and knock at the bars of the wicket, at the very bars before which Henry of Valois, and hundreds of brave knights, about whom old Froissart has discoursed, have stood awaiting the seneschal to open.

An old man draws a sliding iron plate and looks out, and querulously demands our business.

"We would see the marquis, your master!" we answer.

"No man sees him! Go! Unless you bring him the only news his ears care to hear from outside his walls!"

"And what may be this news?" we ask.

"Of his lost son! Unless you bear tidings of him, you cross not the castle threshold."

"Such is, indeed, the news we bring," answered M. Cussac, as the seneschal challenged him at nightfall, two weeks after we left him and our party crossing the ocean towards France. It was after dark when the whole party reached the castle gate, and M. Cussac applied with a loud knock for admission. The old man could not in the darkness see the comers; but he soon was satisfied that it was the voice of M. Cussac, who, seven months before, had departed from the chateau on his mission in search of the heir.

"Have you news from the young lord?" demanded the old man, eagerly, as he unbarred the gate.

"The best of news! We bring back the young lord and the marchioness."

"The Holy Virgin be praised!" cried the seneschal, as he threw open the door, and held a lamp in his hand towards the party.

He recognized the marchioness, and wept upon and kissed her hand as she called him by name, her own eyes filling with tears, at once more standing within the gates of the chateau, from which she had been so rudely thrust forth. The seneschal then held Vivien at arms' length, regarded him closely, and fell on his knees and asked his blessing; but Vivien raised him, and embraced him with filial respect.

"Now, this good news will surely kill my lord," said the old man. "I must go and break it to him not too suddenly. He is now in the chapel with the confessor at vespers; for he passes all his time in penitence and prayers."

"And is my father better in health?" asked Vivien, with tender interest.

"One side is partly paralyzed; but he does not suffer, and he walks about slowly leaning on the priest. But come in all! and you, my young lord marquis, welcome to the castle of your ancestors. I will conduct you into the great hall, while I go and bring M Cussac with his good news to my master The marchioness and the heir—both come back! What a happy day for an old servitor like me to live to see! Now am I ready to depart in peace, for the wish of my heart is realized."

Upon his knees, in his private chapel, kneeled a tall and prematurely gray form. The noble countenance was haggard with inward wretchedness, but the whole air and aspect was deeply penitential. He was confessing.

"If you are truly penitent," said the priest, at whose side he kneeled, "Heaven forgives, and of this I assure thee by my priestly authority to declare it, and I give you absolution, as I have daily done on thy daily penitence for the great wrong done thy wife and child."

"Was it no palliation, holy father, that our marriage was not sanctioned by Holy Church!"

"No, my son! But rather your greater sin; for you deceived her by putting off this duty which you had pledged her should follow the Protestant rite."

"Mea culpa—mea culpa! I have sinned," answered the Marquis, bowing his head upon the knees of his confessor. "But I have sought to atone by sending over the world to seek my wife and son! You know I have spared no money!"

"This will be accepted of God in some atonement, my son! But if both are lost, if both are no more, there lies at your door a crime that I tremble to name, for which you have need to clothe yourself in dust and ashes!"

"Murder? Murder two-fold! I know it! I feel it all! I will show my repentance, if they appear no more, by giving all my wealth to Holy Church, save providing continual masses for their souls. I am a sinful, sinful man!"

"You perceive how the indulgence of our passions, my son, can lead to great crimes unwittingly. Without doubt, your wife and son are no more! If they live, how, unless God in reward for your long and deep contrition, wonderfully brings them across the path of the men you have sent to find them, how can they be recovered? Only by a miracle of grace!"

"Only, I feel! But God will not vouchsafe to me this favor?"

"Nothing is impossible to God's goodness and grace, my son! He may not only reward your contrition but their years of sorrow and suffering if they live. For your sake and theirs he may grant this joy. But there is little hope that you will ever behold them more!"

"Alas, alas! I fear that your words are true! Ought I not then to provide for masses for their souls! If they are no more they will serve them in the other state; if they live they will serve other souls in Hades."

The priest was about to reply when the chapel door opened quickly, and the old seneschal came in so suddenly, and with such an excited manner, that the marquis rose to his feet quicker than his wont, and the confessor said, sternly,

"Why this interruption of our devotions?"

"Your prayers are answered, my master! Here is Monsieur de Cussac, and he brings great news!"

"News? M. Cussac!" repeated the marquis, eagerly. "What tidings, monsieur?" And he earnestly extended his two arms, and almost imploringly.

"Good news, my lord!"

"Speak! What—hast thou heard of my poor lost ones?"

"Not *too* sudden," whispered the seneschal, behind M. Cussac's ear. "By bits."

"Yes, my lord! But may it please you to sit down and hear my news!"

The marquis sank into a seat by the confessional, and with eyes full of intense feeling stared wildly and haggardly upon him. "Now—speak—I hear!"

"The marchioness lives, my lord!"

"Lives! Then God has not wholly cursed me! Where? Why did you not bring her with you! Do not mock me!"

"She lives and my lord will soon embrace her. But more good news still, if my lord can bear it!"

"Speak!" he said, tremblingly.

"Your son lives!"

"Then is God gracious and merciful to a poor sinner!" cried the marquis, bowing his head and then lifting his eyes with grateful worship to Heaven. "My son lives! Oh, deceive me not!"

"I do not deceive you, my lord! He lives and you will soon behold him!"

"Let me see him—let me embrace him and die in peace!"

"Are these all words of truth, son?" demanded the priest.

"Yes, reverend priest! The marchioness and her son were wonderfully found by us, in America, and both are now within the castle awaiting the opportunity to be received by the marquis."

"Do I dream? Go—go! holy father! Bring them. Let me here, before God's altar, and in his presence receive back again those whom I wickedly cast off. My wife—my child! Both here?"

"Both, my dearmaster," said the seneschal. "I have seen both but now! The young lord is tall and noble and has the air of his blood! I would know him among a thousand."

"Thank God—thank God. And my poor, ill-treated wife?"

"Beautiful and stately, and with the same sweet face and voice, my Lord!"

"Wonderful! God has accepted my penitence and prayers! But I must see, my eyes must behold them and not another's, ere I can believe all this!"

"They are coming, dear master!"

"Let me grasp thy arm, good friend! I fear that I shall fall to the earth, both with shame and excess of joy to behold my wronged ones again."

He fixed his eyes upon the chapel door which was opened by M. Cussac. First he beheld advancing, at a quick pace and with extended arms, the marchioness; for she had heard of his deep repentence, and was ready to meet the penitent halfway.

"My lord! My noble and dear husband!"

"Eugenie! Yes! I recognise you—it is my wife—my injured wife!"

He made a movement as if he would cast himself at her knees; but she received his head upon her shoulder, pressed her lips to his face, and wept tears of joy (for she had ever loved him, the husband of her youth).

"My Eugenie!"

"My husband!"

"Can you pardon?"

"God has forgiven, or we should not both see this hour. I forgive also."

"Thanks—blessings! And Vivien, my son?"

"Here, dear father!" cried our hero, kneeling at his feet.

"Nay—not there—not there—in my *arms*—upon my breast!"

The marquis for a moment yielded to the overpowering emotions of the occasion.

All present gazed on in silent joy at the three enfolded in one another's arms.

At length the marquis looked at his son and surveyed his features.

"Indeed, God has blessed me! I see in you your mother's looks. And so noble and tall, as my father was, with his kingly eye. Let me embrace you once more, my son. Let me be assured that I do not dream!"

The marchioness regarded her husband, sadly.

Time, and remorse, and penitential acts, had made an old man of the proud and haughty noble she had last seen him. Tears filled her eyes.

"I am an old man, Eugenie! You alone and my son have not been sufferers. But God is merciful. I feel that your return is proof of his forgiveness."

"And of ours, dear husband," answered the marchioness. "The past shall be forgiven all!"

"And forgotten, my dear father," added Vivien. "Now my dear father prepare to embrace these my friends, who have been my foster parents and to whom I owe the care of my childhood and even life. This is Ambrose Falconer!"

"Falconer? That is an old baronial name! The Falconers of Brittany are our cousins! But they are Protestants."

"The same family, my lord," answered Ambrose. "My ancestors were from Brittany."

"Let me welcome and reward you, my friend," answered the nobleman, pressing Ambrose by the hand.

"And here," said Vivien, "is my wife and my son!"

And he presented Isabel and her babe to the marquis, who kissed the mother, and taking the infant in his trembling arms, embraced it with tears, saying with upraised eyes,

"Truly, Heaven has multiplied my mercies."

"And here is Mary, my foster mother," said Vivien. You must love her for my sake, dear father."

"All who love you are loved by me, my son," he said, taking the hand of Mary who, pale, yet happy, was a joyful witness of the scene of reunion of the husband and father with his wife and son.

"One more, dear father! This is a kind old man who has been for years my true friend. He is humble in station but he has a heart of a king!"

And Vivien presented gray-haired old Diggon, who had diffidently kept in the back ground, and who now seemed as happy as any of them.

There were a few moments more passed in expressions of happiness and re-embraces, in which the venerable priest took his part, for he had christened Vivien in his infancy and welcomed him back to his father's halls with great emotion.

"Now that we are in this holy chapel," he said, "let us all bend the knees of gratitude to Heaven for this happy meeting, and offer thanksgiving and praise for accepting, in so wonderful a manner the repentence of his child, whose gray hairs and pale brow bear testimony to his sorrow."

After a short but solemn interval given to gratitude and Heaven, the priest said, impressively,

"My lord, now is the hour and moment before these witnesses to do your duty to your injured wife. Here, before this altar, seal to her the long withholden marriage ritual of Holy Church."

The marquis bowed and placed in his hand that of the marchioness and the benediction, as they two kneeled in front by the chancel, with Vivien, Isabel, Ambrose and Mary kneeling grouped around them, the sacred benediction of the Church was bestowed upon them.

The now happy marquis with tears pressed the bridal kiss upon the cheek of his bride, and with emotions of indescribable happiness all rose and left the chapel for the domestic apartments of the castle.

We now leave our hero and all the parties to our story in the possession of the happiness to which they have been conducted. The Marquis did not long survive and Vivien soon entered upon the possession of his domains as the Marquis de Pontoise. Ambrose became a happy farmer, and Mary's health under the mild air of France, was restored and at this day she is the happiest farmer's wife in la belle France. Old Diggon is a gentleman at large, but chiefly passes his time in sailing and fishing on the lake at the foot of the castle and in making miniature ships for the young heir of Pontoise, Ambrose, now a noble little fellow the height of his thigh. The marchioness is happy in the happiness of which she is the central object, and the past is remembered only as a school of humility and to temper with wisdom their present bliss. But there is one personage we have yet to speak of.

One evening, about two years after the death of the old marquis, a peasant came to the castle and reported he had found a man in the forest who had been robbed and nearly slain. Vivien hastened to the hut where the stranger had been conveyed and to his surprise beheld stretched bleeding before him, from a gun shot wound, the form of Mr. Shenstone.

In a moment he divined the probable cause of his presence in the neighborhood of the castle—still the pursuit of a blind revenge. But, tempted by his air of wealth, some robbers who infested the forest, had way-laid and robbed him and left him for dead. Without doubt, Vivien had rightly divined the truth.

But he, himself, had no feeling of hatred. He had the dying man conveyed to the castle, but neither the care of the gentle and forgiving Isabel whom he recognized and sought pardon of, nor the skill of physicians could save him. He died truly penitent for his life of passion, confessing to the horror of all present, the secret, we already know, the murder of the mother of Isabel. To her he left his vast fortune, but regarding it as the "price of blood," she gave it to build up a charitable institution for the orphans of foreigners, remembering her own husband a homeless wanderer in a foreign land.

THE END.

THE BLIND AND THE DEAF.—One of the most striking differences between the blind and the deaf is the tendency shown by the blind, in all ages, to poetry and poetical composition, a taste which the deaf have never exhibited.

THE FAITHFUL MAIDEN.

Nearly half a century ago, a beautiful, but poor young girl named Esther Levi, engaged herself as a servant in the house of Mr. Goldsmith, an Israelite merchant, residing in Cheapside, London; and, as she was mild, complaisant, and desirous of pleasing, she obtained the good feeling of all the family.

Mr. Goldsmith had always forbade his children being harsh to servants. "That which we have a right to expect from our servants," he observed, "is that they fulfil their duties with regularity. Humanity then exacts that, far from aggravating their position, we should, by treating them kindly, lessen their sense of servitude." This principle was faithfully observed, and, at the end of some years, Esther was considered as one of the family.

Misfortune at last accumulated on the house of Goldsmith. Two of the children died; the war with France interfered with the commerce of England, and ruined Mr. Goldsmith, who died of grief, after a lingering illness, which exhausted his last resources. His poor wife, left without rents, fortune, or defender, was maddened by distress, and her health became seriously affected by continued watchings and grief. One morning the afflicted widow called her servant, and with tears in her eyes, said:

"My good Esther, we must separate. Your devotion merits a reward; but alas! I am ruined, and it is with difficulty I can pay the wages I owe you. Take this money, the last I have left; accept as a token of friendship this ring, the only one of my jewels that I have not parted with."

"What are you proposing to me?" rejoined Esther, sobbing. "Would you send me away? Can I quit you, when you so much need my services? Have I asked for my wages? When you were rich you treated me as your child, and now you are aged, poor, and sick, I will regard you as my mother. You cannot work—but never mind. I am young and strong, and can strive for us both."

For ten years Esther fulfilled her generous terms. She supported Mrs. Goldsmith by the work of her hands, and with so much cheerfulness, that she always appeared the obliged party, and exercised so much delicacy that no person suspected her heroic devotedness. At length, in 1815, peace was proclaimed between France and England, and Mrs. Goldsmith collected some heavy debts due to her late husband. She passed the latter years of her life in calm and easy circumstances, which she doubly enjoyed in sharing them with her faithful domestic, in whose favor her will ran thus:—

"I give and bequeath all I possess to my well beloved daughter, Esther Levi; and I desire she may hereafter bear the name of Goldsmith, to preserve the remembrance of her exalted conduct, in what concerns a family who will never cease to pray to the Eternal that she be rewarded as she merits."

COMFORT BEFORE APPEARANCES.

Most people are too apt to sacrifice comfort to appearances, to subject their own families to manifold privations and discomforts in order to astonish with a show of affluence a few acquaintances who seldom visit them, and who only laugh at their foolish and puerile attempts at displaying a little superior upholstery in a room which none of the family dare make use of. Many is the house we have seen wherein the "parlor" was crammed with useless stuff while not a single room was comfortably furnished.

Every family should seek first the utmost comfort for its own members that its means will compass; and then, if there is a surplus of funds which they know not what else to do with, let it be devoted to the purchase of something to please the eyes of strangers—or rather to excite envy in their bosoms; for such things generally occasion far more envy than pleasure among rival householders. Those apartments of a house which are most used should receive the most attention. The dining-room and sleeping apartments should receive the most especial care for on these does the health, (and consequently the comfort and happiness) of the family pre-eminently depend. In short, seek first your own comfort, and the "appearances" will take care of themselves.

A PERNICIOUS HABIT.

There is nothing more fatal to a man whose business is to think, than to have learned the art of regaling his mind with those airy gratifications known as building castles in the air. Other vices or follies are restrained by fear, reformed by admonition, or rejected by the conviction which the comparison of our conduct with that of others may in time produce. But this invisible riot of the mind, this secret prodigality of being, is secure from detection, and fearless of reproach. The dreamer retires to his apartments, shuts out the cares and interruptions of mankind, and abandons himself to his own fancy; new worlds rise up before him, one image is followed by another, and a long succession of delights dances round him. He is at last called back to life by nature, or by custom, and enters peevish into society, because he cannot model it to his own will. He returns from his idle excursions with the asperity, though not with the knowledge, of a student, and hastens again to the same felicity with the eagerness of a man bent upon the advancement of some favorite science. The infatuation strengthens by degrees, and, like the poison of opiates, weakens his powers, without any external symptoms of malignity

AN UNCOMFORTABLE PREDICAMENT.

A few mornings since, a young gentleman went to bathe in the East river, at a secluded spot above Green Point. The water being rather cooler than he expected, after swimming about for some minutes, he returned to the bank, and was proceeding to dress himself, when a Durham bull moved in stately form towards him, pawing the ground, tossing his head, and switching his tail. The bather, perceiving the acquaintance becoming rather close, shook his coat at the animal to deter him, but this appeared to have been taken as an invitation to advance, and the animal came on at an accelerated pace, when the poor wight was compelled to save himself by jumping into the river. He was no sooner submerged than the bull took his clothes on his horns, and pitched them one after the other into the water. The gentleman caught his clothes, and hung by the bank, trying occasionally to escape, but the bull guarded the bank so as to prevent a retreat. He was thus kept in the water for three hours, until discovered by some persons passing, who drove away the Durham, and released the benumbed bather from his unpleasant position.

AN IDEA FOR TEMPERANCE LEGISLATORS.—The following is the German mode of preventing Sunday tippling. All persons drinking upon Sundays and holidays in coffee-houses, &c., during service, are authorized to depart without paying for what they have had. Such a regulation in America would have a most beneficial tendency in improving the morals of the lower classes of society, and greatly contribute to the comfort of families.

THE GRAVES OF MEMORY.

BY SALLIE M. BRYAN.

There is a lonely waste of graves
Beside a stream of sighing waves,
Where mourning groups of cypress trees,
And weeping-willows, kiss the breeze,
And some white roses faded there,
Though they were planted with a prayer.

Above one grave a marble form
Defies the midnight's sweeping storm;
A wreath is on that statue's brow,
And crowds before its glory bow.
And yet one clasping arm is wound
A broken heart and harp around;

And one is grasping through the air,
As if the *something yet* were there!
The heart and harp are as my own—
The wreath is like a vision gone.
This dream-built tomb I thought of yore
Should rise when some lone life was o'er.

Some other graves are shaded o'er
With myrtle from the heart's own shore—
Green with the memories of the past,
Though round them blighting dews fall fast.
Beside those mounds a breeze's sigh
Forever says: "Gone by, gone by!"

One form that's there beneath the sod
Seemed brighter than a Grecian god!
The classic curve the red lip wore,
The brow whose beauty charms no more,
The heavy clouds of midnight hair,
The wild, dark eyes with love-light there:

All these—all, all are mouldering low
In the dim vale of long ago.
Yes, these, and one who wins more sighs
With sunny curls and deep blue eyes;
Ay, one more worshiped than all these
Rests in the grave of memories.

FOREST SKETCHES---NO. 24.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

BY COL. WALTER P. DUNLAP.

ADVENTURE WITH A BENGAL TIGER.

The night set in cold and rainy, and instead of riding over to Shreveport, to get what there might be in the post-office for us, we sat down in mammy's sitting-room, and there called upon Uncle Abner for the story he had promised us. The shooting of the tiger-cat had put him in mind of an adventure which he said he would relate to us on the first opportunity; and what opportunity more fitting than such an evening in such a place?

"Well, boys," said the old man, knocking the ashes from his pipe, and putting it on the little shelf where he kept it, "I'll tell ye a bit of adventure I once had above Calcutta a bit. It wasn't very pleasant sport at the time, though it's well enough to think of now.

"One morning a heavy lighter came alongside, manned by half-a-dozen natives. Our captain had engaged her to go after fresh water. About ten miles above Hoogly—and I don't know but it may be more—there was a fine stream of water, and there we were going, intending to be gone over one night. Our first mate, a stout, good-hearted fellow, named Bill Gillot, was to take charge, and Sam Willis, Jack Springer, and myself, were to accompany him.

"We got our guns and pistols aboard the lighter—for ye see, there were likely to be robbers about wherever Americans or Europeans ventured off in small parties—and having put our bedding and provisions in, we made sail up the river. We had a fair wind, and by noon we reached the mouth of the stream, up which we were to get our water. It was quite a little river, coming in from the north'rd and west'rd, and as we turned into it we could feel that it was cooler and sweeter than the water of the Hoogly.

"About four miles up we came to the camp where the native water-carriers were in the habit of stopping, and here we came to, and made fast. Some forty or fifty feet back from the bank, on the edge of a thick, deep jungle, there was a spring which sent out water enough to supply quite a stream. It was at this spring we meant to get our water; and as soon as all was ready we set our natives at work carrying the buckets to and from the lighter, we filling them at the spring.

"As we five could fill much faster than the porters could carry, and as it was not in the contract that we should lug water under the hot sun, Gillot and I left the other three filling, while we went to explore the jungle. But we did not go a great way. The reeds were so thick and stout that we could with difficulty make our way among them; and, in fact, we could not, save where a sort of path had already been beaten. While we were in there the mate made some remark about the tiger. The very sound of the monster's name was enough to make me tremble.

"When we returned we asked the natives if tigers were ever seen about in that neighborhood? They said they had never seen one, though there had been tracks found upon the edge of the spring, which were supposed to have been made by the tiger. The oldest of the Indians, and the one who hired all the others, said he had been engaged in work that had called him to this spring—more or less for fifteen years; but he had never seen anything that looked like the animal in question.

"Most of the people of this country have a mistaken idea of the tiger. The few specimens which have been carried around to show are not much like the real Royal Tiger of Bengal. There are certainly three different sorts of tigers, and they vary in size as well as in color. The smaller kind have the same general characteristics, and are colored after the same pattern as the larger ones; but the colors are not so bright. The Royal Tiger has a yellow ground to his skin, and then the stripes are a beautiful black, running over the back, and down the sides, about in the same course with the ribs. But it is with regard to the size of the animal that there is the most mistake. When I tell a man I have seen a tiger ten feet long from his nose to the end of the back, and then five feet of tail added to that, making fifteen feet in all, he don't want to believe me. But it is so.

"The royal tiger has been seen to carry off a full-sized buffalo! An old Hindoo merchant—an honorable man, and one who could have no earthly reason for deceiving me—assured me that his men killed a tiger in one of the deep jungles of the Burracoor whose body alone was thirteen feet in length! I might have hesitated about believing this had I not seen one myself nearly twice as large as I supposed they ever grew.

"You can imagine something of the strength of such an animal. It is very fortunate that they are scarce, for their destructiveness is beyond all precedent. They kill for the mere sake of killing. Let one of them make his way among a herd of cattle, and he will kill without eating a morsel while there is a living animal to be seen. While they can get blood they will not taste flesh. They do not eat to appease their hunger only; they eat to gorge themselves; they will gulp down blood while they can stand. It is said by those who best understand their habits that they love human flesh more than anything else; and will leave the blood of any animal for a man. Such taste as that, though it may flatter humanity, I must say I fail to admire or appreciate.

"When night came we hauled our lighter into the middle of the stream, and then turned in. When we awoke in the morning one of the natives said he had heard a low, howling noise during the night, not far off. At one time he thought it was a tiger, and was upon the point of arousing us; but as he listened more attentively it sounded nearer like the yelping of a dog, and he concluded to let us sleep.

"As soon as we had eaten our breakfast we hauled our lighter to the shore, and commenced work. The sun had got high enough to throw down an uncomfortable heat, when I plainly heard a crashing in a distant part of the jungle, and in a few moments more one of the natives started the cry,

"*The tiger! The tiger!*"

"In all the various sounds of earth I doubt if there is another which can strike such terror to the souls of the natives of that country as does that cry. No sooner did it break upon the air than the rest of the Indians took it up, and at the same time rushed for the lighter. They had just gained it, and we, who stood beneath the awning which had been spread over the spring, were about to follow, when a low, deep cry, like the snarl of a cat a thousand times multiplied in volume and depth, broke upon our ears, and on the next instant a dark object came, with a sort of blurring sensation, before our eyes. We started back, and as soon as I could fairly look I saw a huge tiger crouching upon the hard sand about half way between us and the boat!

"He was gazing upon the natives. They knew his habits well enough not to run any further then. They had gained the bows of the lighter only, when the tiger leaped from the jungle, and the cuddy, or little cabin, was in the after part. They knew if they turned to seek that place the monster would leap upon them; so they stood in a body and faced him; while he lay in a crouching posture, with his tail lashing the sand, and his claws gathering for a spring.

"We had taken our guns up with us to the spring; for the report of the native who had heard the noise in the night served to put us on our guard. The pieces were common heavy muskets, and we had loaded them with two bullets each. We seized them as quickly as possible, but there was a difficulty in the way of our firing. The tiger was directly between us and the natives! The place where we stood was some feet higher than the shore, and the place where the monster was crouched was in a direct line with the bows of the boat.

A ball passing through his body from one of our guns would if it kept on in a straight line, strike the natives at the breast.

"It was very evident that no time was to be lost, and yet our best course was not so easily decided. However, we were just upon the point of moving around so as to bring the tiger out from that fatal range, when I noticed that the natives were not only conversing eagerly, but were also changing their positions. I saw that they were up to some plot, but what it was I could not tell. They saw how we were situated with regard to firing, and hence they seemed to have studied for themselves. Presently one of them spoke to us:

"'The tiger means for leap at us! He looks find if we got swords and guns! He find no—he leap. When you see him on boat you fire! Fire at him——

"The Indian probably meant to tell us where to aim, but that moment a movement in another quarter arrested his attention. They had each gained a position to suit, and then watched the tiger with the most intense eagerness. I saw the monster's fore legs move—I saw the claws open upon the sand—and then came that peculiar gathering of the body which shows that the muscular power is all concentrated. On the next instant the huge body left the earth; and as it did so the six natives disappeared, as if by magic. They had dropped down into the spaces between the casks, doubling themselves up like hedgehogs.

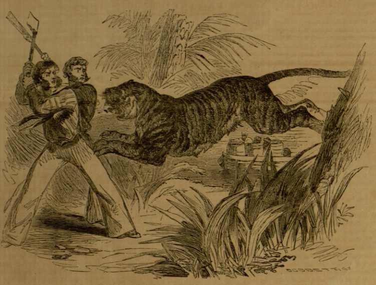
"The tiger struck the tops of the casks, and seemed for the moment to be utterly confounded; and during that moment we raised our muskets. The beast stood slightly quartering, with his head from me, so that my best point of sight was just behind his shoulder. We fired together, or very nearly so.

"While yet the ring of our reports was upon the air we heard a deafening howl, and before the smoke had cleared away, so that we could see the lighter, the tiger was upon the sand, very near the spot where he had crouched before. He saw us, and with another yell leaped towards us. I clubbed my musket, and struck him upon the head as he passed me, but the blow seemed to make no impression upon him. He kept on some yards beyond us, and then turned. He did not stop to gather for a spring, but rushed directly towards us. We moved quickly aside, and he passed us again.

"We now knew, of course, that he was bewildered, and to such an extent that he could not reason. As he turned a second time the mate caught the axe, which we had brought with us for ordinary use, and stood by to use it. He grasped it with a steady nerve, for there was little danger now, and as the tiger came on again, hesitating and half-turning when he reached us, Bill brought him a blow upon the top of the head that split his skull. The mighty beast staggered sideway a few steps, and then fell!

"The natives now came up from the lighter, and their shouts of joy and exultation were beyond anything of the kind I ever heard before. They claimed a good share of credit in the monster's death, and we were willing to grant it; for had they not acted as coolly and resolutely as they did, the tiger would not have been killed as he was; and beyond that it was impossible to judge what might have happened. At all events, I don't believe that we, had we been exactly in their situation, would have done so well as they did. We should not have resorted to stratagem so easily and naturally; but should have been more likely either to have made for the cabin, or to have faced him and made the best of it—in either of which cases we should probably have come out second best.

"The tiger measured seven feet and a half in length of body, and nearly eleven feet from nose to tail inclusive. Two of our bullets had passed within half-an-inch of his heart; one had entered his head; while one was lodged in his shoulder.



We voted the skin to our mate, and he was thankful and proud.

"It was lucky that we had the skin to show when we returned to the ship, else the crew might not have believed that we had slain such an animal so easily."

ADVICE.

Do not look for wrong and evil—
You will find them if you do,
As you measure for your neighbor
He will measure back to you.

Look for goodness, look for gladness,
You will meet them all the while;
If you bring a smiling visage
To the glass, you meet to smile.

ALICE CARY.

POLITENESS.

What is *true* politeness? Does it consist merely in what are recognized as the personal graces?—in smiles, in bows, and the like muscular movements? No; nor in the mere "polish," or "elegance of manner," included in the definitions of the lexicographers. It consists in something deeper and higher than these, which *may* be only external and occasional. It has reference to the heart and the conscience—to the moral sense—to the soul.

Lord Chesterfield has left his views of politeness. So has the Apostle Paul. Compare their teachings. You cannot fail to detect the difference, or to decide in favor of the latter. His rules are those of sincerity. They are founded on just views of duty to the neighbor. They are unselfish, and therefore always kind in tone, and kindly in tendency. The rules laid down by Chesterfield ignore all ideas of sincerity, and scoff at them as silly sentimentalism. Their practice leads to deceit. Their end is not to "deal justly," but to "please." They begin and end in love of self, not of the neighbor. They may convert you into a practical hypocrite. But they will never make you a just man—and, without "equal and exact justice to all men," there can be no true politeness. In the sincere practice of this rule, whether by the most uncouth son of the mountain, or the most polished daughter of the valley—the millionaire in his palace, or the peasant in his hut—the pioneer in his cabin, or the Indian in his wigwam—is *true* politeness to be found. This, and this only, will endure the test of the golden rule, and render social intercourse what God designed it to be among those formed after his image, and made only "a little lower than the angels."

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A Young Bachelor wants to know "how he can talk entertainingly to ladies, and make himself generally agreeable to them?" He says he has mastered several languages and sciences and yet many shallow-brained fellows eclipse him in the drawing-room. He can argue with men by the hour, but he cannot maintain a conversation with ladies for five minutes. There are many such learned men. Science does not fit a man to shine in conversation; and in regard to drawing-room and promiscuous-ladies chit-chat your man of "solid learning" is a fool. To excel in general conversation, especially with ladies, a person must have wit and a poetical temperament so he can throw a sparkling and roseate hue over any subject and invest trifles with interest. Besides, it requires a very cultivated mind to talk "agreeable nonsense," which, after all, is the most amusing conversation, and withal very instructive.

Little Dorrit.—We know nothing about the discreditable stories of Dickens to which you refer, nor do we wish to encourage such scandalous gossip. There are too many editors who are ready to publish any report concerning a distinguished person, whether man or woman, that is highly flavored with malignity and scandal. To the best of our knowledge, Charles Dickens is an amiable, benevolent, and strictly moral man. If he has any fault, it is that he sets too little value on the money which he so easily earns. We commend to you the utter disregard of all scandalous, libellous, defamatory, and outrageous reports, rumors and stories concerning strangers, with which you meet in newspapers; and when you have met with three such scurrilous articles in a paper, you would do well to discontinue taking it.

W. R. S.—Yes; the hope of reward and the fear of punishment always were, now are, and ever will be, the principal stimulants to human activity. But the aspects of the reward and punishment are infinitely varied in different ages, climates and individuals. We cannot say whether the hope of reward or the fear of punishment is the greater. Taking the entire race into consideration they are probably equally balanced; though some individuals are so avaricious for rewards that they never think of punishments, and others are so terrified at the dread of punishment for evil deeds they seldom turn their thoughts upon the rewards of virtue.

Edward.—If you do not and cannot love the young lady it would be unjust both to yourself and to her to consummate the engagement; but as the fact that you are engaged is known it will place the young lady in a most unpleasant position to have the affair broken off no matter what may be the reason assigned, and therefore you should consult her feelings as far as possible in the matter and do everything in such a way as will give her the least pain and embarrassment. She will of course have a good cause of action against you for breach of promise in case she does not assent to the breaking off of the engagement.

L. E. M.—The reason we are drawn towards some people at first sight, and repelled by others, is probably to be sought in magnetism, which acts independently of our wills and often compels us to form attachments and hatreds even against the dictation of our better judgment.

Nettie and Hettie wish to know if a gentleman were walking with two ladies and another gentleman should come up and offer his arm to one of them, whether she should take it and leave the side of the first beau? That would depend upon circumstances. In the first place, a man should not offer his arm to a lady under such circumstances, unless he knows the parties and their relations to each other so well that he is certain the act will occasion no embarrassment or chagrin to be felt by any of them. In such a state of affairs there would be no impropriety in his offering and the lady's accepting his arm; otherwise, he ought not to offer it, and if he should, he is the one that should suffer the chagrin consequent upon his own ill-mannered act.

Junior Pitt.—The agreement of a girl under age to marry you, without the consent of her parents, would not be binding in law, and you should not attempt to get such a consent with the intention of withholding a knowledge of it from the girl's parents. Long engagements are bad. Parties should become thoroughly acquainted before entering into a marriage engagement.

A Real Infidel finds fault with the high moral and religious tone of the Ledger, and wishes to know if we will not publish a few articles in favor of atheism if he will send them to us? No; we do not publish a paper for infidels; we have no sympathy with infidels; we pity the dupes of atheism; and we abominate immorality and irreligion under whatever names they stalk or sneak.

Curious.—We cannot give you the name of the author of the communication referred to. Everything of that nature is treated by us as strictly confidential.

J. T., Bridgeport.—We cannot advise you as to whom you can confide the secret of your new invention.

Mary.—Common sense, tempered with the instinctive delicacy natural to women, is your best guide in all social as well as other matters. There is no occasion to be distant and cool to any friend. Why should a lady be distant and cool to a gentleman merely because he does not speak of love? A lady should not suffer any familiarity on the part of a gentleman who is not a privileged lover. But as for distance and coolness to a regular visitant of the family, it is scarcely becoming. Only never remain long in his company at a time, nor seek it. It is a difficult part for a lady to play well, to combine grace with dignity. Those who cannot do both are apt to become cold and haughty in supporting dignity, or flippant, cheap, and easily conquered, in supporting grace. But neither seems satisfactory without the other.

Mabelle.—Your case seems a hard one; but you had better obey your parents nevertheless. If your lover, who has thus far behaved so honorably, is true-hearted he will wait. It would not be wrong for you to send him a letter informing him of your unalterable attachment, also of the fact that your parents will not permit you to continue a correspondence, and assuring him that whatever happens you will remain true. With such a letter in his possession he can afford to wait until you become of age and are able to act for yourself.

Adrienne.—The verses of your little friend, Kate, exhibit indications of some poetic fire, a tender, loving nature, and a tolerably good ear; but their incomplete finish excludes them from our columns. It would benefit Kate to read Addison's criticisms, in the "Spectator," of Paradise Lost, and Johnson's criticisms of the same work, in the "Rambler," commencing with the lxxxvi. number.

W. C.—This correspondent wishes to know if it would be right for a married man to send the Ledger gratuitously to a young lady with whom he wishes to become better acquainted? If his *motives* were right, the *act* would be right; if he has doubts as to the propriety of the *act*, it strikes us that his *motives* are not precisely what they should be. Let him ask his wife.

Mabel.—It is a matter of friendship, judgment and discretion whether or not a lady should accept an offered courtesy at the hands of a gentleman. It is always advisable not to wound a friend's feelings, and it is equally necessary that a lady should be exceedingly careful not to compromise or entangle herself with another by the acceptance of courtesies.

X. X. X.—You would probably run no risk in carrying out your design, although a father may forbid the marriage of his daughter when she is under age. As for going to law afterwards, it is only a rich father that can do that, and they seldom do; for what is the use, in general, of undoing a marriage that is done?

Enquirer, Westfield.—Your friend is enormously mistaken in supposing that a steam-press ordinarily prints one hundred thousand papers an hour. Some steam-presses print but five hundred sheets an hour, and the very fastest cannot exceed twenty thousand—there are not more than six in the country that can do much more than half of that number.

A Happy Subscriber writes that some nine months since he presented a year's subscription to the Ledger as a phillipoena present to a young lady, the result of which is that he and the young lady now read the same copy of the paper, *in their own house*, where the Ledger shall be a welcome visitor as long as they and it exist together.

G. H. M.—The "Gun-maker of Moscow" was the first story written for the Ledger by Sylvanus Cobb, Jr. Previous to the publication of that wonderfully successful tale, the Ledger had attained a circulation greater than that of any other paper of its class. The "Gun-maker of Moscow" is now out of print, and cannot be obtained any where.

Cynthia.—A girl can do nothing and should do nothing to regain the affection of a false-hearted lover, except to behave herself with the utmost propriety. What is the use of "winning back the love" of such a person? A woman of good sense and delicacy should respect herself too highly to stoop to such a degrading pursuit.

H., Jamaica, L. I.—Your master has a right to make you work more than ten hours a day, and can also require you to do any work he has to be done, whether in the shop or out of it. A newsdealer in Jamaica has no business to charge you five cents for the Ledger; the price should be four cents.

Clara.—Yes; as a general rule, a lady should ask a gentleman who has escorted her home "to walk in." If the hour should be unseasonable, the escort would of course decline, unless he were an ignoramus.

C. G. C.—The "Storm Secret," by Sylvanus Cobb, Jr., is commenced in the Ledger for June 7th, 1856; the numbers from that date to October 11th inclusive, of the same year, will cost seventy-six cents.

A Subscriber.—If your own sense of propriety, and judgment, and your knowledge of the circumstances, will not enable you to tell whether the "gentleman" intended to insult you, you had better not consider the remark insulting.

Whigsville.—No; a woman should *not* uphold "the man of her choice" when he is obviously in the wrong; on the contrary, she should show him that wrong-doing even in him is repugnant to her.

Young America.—Yes; it is a sign of most arrant cowardice for one who has provoked a quarrel with an unarmed man, to draw a knife or pistol upon him, or to attack him with a cane, club, stone, or other weapon.

Seventy-Six.—It is of course proper to celebrate the Fourth of July in the usual gunpowder and spread-eagle style. Let young patriotism explode and effervesce to its heart's content.

D.—Of course not. If a lady is convinced that a man has slandered her, she should have nothing to say to him, no matter what pretences of friendship he may make.

Dabo Kid.—Old type is usually sold at about nine cents a pound. We have none for sale. You had better go to the nearest printing office to get the small quantity you want.

J. L. R.—Yes; it would be inexcusably wrong for a man to pay particular attentions to a woman and engage her affections, when he had no idea of marrying her.

D. W., Baton Rouge.—The reason the female figure on the coin of the United States is styled the image of the "Goddess of Liberty," is because the figure *is* the image of her.

Ellen.—A woman who is dissatisfied with her husband's conduct should do what her heart and head tell her would be for the best.

July Subscriber.—No. If you wish your subscription to commence next July, do not forward your money until about that date.

Merchant.—It is impossible to give you any rules for learning to swim that would be of practical benefit to you; nor can we say what kind of persons learn to swim easiest, or can become the greatest proficients in the art. It is in the power of everybody to swim who possesses a moderate degree of health and activity; though all will not swim equally well, even with the same amount of practice. Like every other requirement, some will learn quickly, others slowly; while some will always swim with far less effort than their neighbors. The necessary degree of effort, after acquiring the art, depends much upon the natural buoyancy of the individual's body, in which respect there are often great differences. A very thin man, of large bone, for instance, may prove a powerful swimmer for a short time; but as soon as exhaustion steals upon him, he never can well relieve his exertions by throwing himself on his back, and enjoying a pleasant float—because even that quiescent position would require a continuance of the same efforts to keep him on the surface, with a body so constituted, that he has just been making; and a very large and heavy head, with small hands and feet, with weak wrists, are all attended with proportionate difficulties. Those bodies best adapted to become fine swimmers, we should say, are such as have a tendency to fatness, with a good muscular development—they cover more surface, and of course have the elements they are enjoying more under command. We know that there are those who maintain that every man possesses the required qualifications for excelling in this art; and if we ask them how is it, then, that all men do not swim alike? they answer, that they render themselves incapable of proficiency by yielding to fear and prejudice, as well as by the impatience and disappointment they feel at the slow progress they make, increased no doubt, by the occasional hair-breadth escapes from dangers their precipitation and rashness sometimes lead them into. Such declarations amount to nothing, however. The fact simply is that some persons swim with the instinct and facility of ducks, while others never can acquire any great proficiency in the art; just as some are born poets, and others are born mathematicians without the slightest bit of the poetical element in their composition.

Tompkins.—Galvanic rings will afford you no protection against lightning. In a thunder-storm you are safer wet than dry, and safer amongst tall, dry, and rotten or metallic substances than alone, provided you are not very close to them. Within doors you are safest on a feather-bed, and away from the chimney, and also from the window. A dark room, also, is safer than a light one; but in violent storms all such precautions might fail. We have known people afraid of carrying steel umbrellas during a thunder storm. In a late storm, a man with an axe was struck. People are nowhere more safe than in the street. The chimney-tops are their lightning-rods. The churches generally bear the wrath of heaven on such occasions—more frequently than any other buildings, because they are usually taller, and their spires act as lightning-catchers. A large and long conductor is more likely to be taken by the lightning than a little short conductor, like man; but that little short conductor in a field, alone, is very likely to be taken, because he is the most convenient. The lightning only seeks its own convenience. It is in a dreadful hurry, and very naturally takes the shortest road to earth, into which it penetrates.

An Unhappy Husband complains sadly of the tongue and tears of his wife. He is kept in perpetual anxiety between fire and water. His wife, though a good, worthy woman, is always making troubles out of trifles, and though they have several nice children, and might be as happy as it is possible to be in this life, her fretfulness is such as to render her own life and his very uncomfortable; she scolds at one time and cries at another, and accuses the poor husband of want of duty and want of affection, and thus tries to extort a tenderness from him of which she gives no example. This is too often the case. But it kills love; neither tongue nor tears will ever make a man love a woman. They may sometimes rule a good-hearted man, but that is a different thing. Neither do we approve of unqualified meekness and patience in a wife. Her duty is to correct her husband's faults by means of such *moral* weapons as nature has given her. Only she should give the balm to heal the wound, and let her infliction be as seldom as possible, and not a continuous current of murmuring and fretting, which makes home uncomfortable, and suggests thoughts of deserting it for better society.

Lucrece.—You are not under any obligation to recognize ball-room acquaintances elsewhere. As to public salutations, it is not etiquette for a gentleman to accost a lady in the street, even by a bow (unless the acquaintance is of a very intimate character), until she has first noticed him by an inclination of the head; thus a lady has it very much in her own power to limit her acquaintance to her inclination. In meeting a gentleman whom you desire to recognize, incline your head gracefully, but do not stop in the street to converse: if he be familiar with polite manners, and desire to speak with you, he will immediately turn and join you, accompanying you while he is speaking. Nothing has so improper an appearance as a lady standing in the street to talk; in such cases how often do we see the interlocutors pushed against and jostled by the passers-by; and no wonder; for who would ever dream that a lady of respectability would stand talking in the street?

Cecily.—You should not allow yourself to get in such a rage over a paragraph ridiculing your sex. Never mind such scurrility. Besides, the worst things ever said *of* women have been said *by* women. Lady Mary Wortley Montague, for instance, said, "the only thing which reconciled her to the idea of *being* a woman was that she should not be obliged to *marry* one!" Did any man ever say a harder thing of the sex than that? As for us, no amount of depreciation of women will change our opinion of them. We believe in them, as mothers, sisters, sweethearts and wives.

Forester.—Women, both married and single, must have recreation of some kind; they must have visitors and "go a-visiting" their neighbors. They cannot sit moping or working at home all the time. A woman's duties are much more wearing, monotonous and oppressive than a man's, and consequently she should have more recreation. Therefore, instead of grumbling because your wife goes visiting, you should be glad to have her go, provided she does not neglect vital interests at home. Are you always at home yourself, when not attending to your business?

An Old Subscriber objects to our answering questions about love and marriage, also to "improbable stories," and wants us to confine ourselves to "matters of fact!" Is not love a matter of fact? Are not lovers and sweethearts all matters of fact? An Old Subscriber has evidently lived too long—long enough to forget all the best part of his life-experience. As to "improbable stories" we agree with him. We never have and never shall publish an "improbable story."

Robert.—The best way to treat an obstinate, sullen girl is, to let her significantly alone. The more you coax such a girl, the more provokingly sullen and "pouty" will she become; but if you treat her with perfect indifference she will feel called upon to exert herself and to display what amiability she can for the purpose of maintaining a place in your esteem and good will.

William W. H.—The irregularity you complain of in the reception of your papers is chargeable upon the distributing post-office which is nearest to you. Our mailing is done with the regularity and precision of clock work; but all sorts of blunders are committed in Uncle Sam's distributing offices. We shall be glad when all newspapers will be obtained through news-offices.

Alfred.—A woman who ridicules a gentleman for loving her and offering her his hand, is unworthy of the slightest regard. She must be an ill-bred, heartless creature, to marry whom would be one of the very greatest misfortunes that could befall an honorable man.

Setauket.—No; in case a gentleman should overtake a couple of ladies walking together, one of whom he knew, it would be highly improper for him to ask permission of his acquaintance to accompany her home and leave the other lady to shift for herself.

Joseph.—A boy of your age should be ashamed of indulging in such habits. Your father did perfectly right to chastise you for your ill-conduct and insolence, and we hope that for every similar offence he will administer a like castigation.

E. D.—Yes; we will send your paper to another address, if you will tell us *what* address, and also be careful to state the one it is at present sent to.

Scotty.—It would be quite right for you to "propose" to the party in question.

H. P. D.—Send the money to the lady to defray the expense of the daguerreotype, express charges, et cetera.

⁂ *Several letters stand over to be answered in our next.*

The only Relief of Old Age.—Piety is the only proper and adequate relief of decaying man. He that grows old without religious hopes, as he declines into imbecility, and feels pains and sorrows incessantly crowding upon him, falls into a gulf of bottomless misery, in which every reflection must plunge him deeper, and where he finds only new gradations of anguish, and precipices of horror.

Two Valuable Things.—Two of the most precious things on this side of the grave are reputation and life. And yet, strange to tell, the most contemptible whisper may deprive us of the first, and the weakest weapon of the second. Be more anxious, therefore, to *deserve* a good name, than to *possess* it.